

Israeli planes raid South Lebanon

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Israeli warplanes blasted Sunday suspected positions of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah group in southern Lebanon hours after a soldier was wounded in an ambush, security officials said. Two Israeli fighter jets swooped down on a mountainous area between the towns of Mashgara and 'Ain Al Tineh in the eastern sector of an Israeli-occupied border enclave in South Lebanon at 5:20 p.m. (15:20 GMT), the Lebanese officials said. The jets staged three sorties, dropping two air-to-surface missiles on the area in each sortie, said the officials. The Israeli soldier was hurt when Hizbollah fighters hit an Israeli mechanised patrol with Sagger missiles and rocket-propelled grenades in the village of Rihan, 10 kilometres north of Marjayoun, according to the officials in Lebanon. They said the injured soldier had been in an Israeli Merkava tank that was hit.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

German hostages allowed to phone home

SANAA (R) — Yemeni tribesmen holding seven German hostages have allowed them to telephone their families as Yemeni forces tightened a siege of the area where they are thought to be held, a security official said on Sunday. The source said the kidnappers "allowed the hostages to telephone their families in Germany on cellular telephones." The men were kidnapped on Monday while riding motorcycles through the Wadi Al Dabaat area between Mahra and Hadramaut provinces. "As negotiations continue with the kidnappers by mediators representing the government, security forces have since last night tightened the siege on the area where the captives are believed held," he told Reuters. The source said the negotiations "centre on how to release the hostages without the government making any concessions to the kidnappers."

Volume 22 Number 6474

AMMAN MONDAY, MARCH 10, 1997, DHU'L-QADAH 1, 1417

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Kabariti, Ben Alawi exchange views

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Sunday received a phone call from Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf Ben Alawi during which they discussed the latest developments in the peace process and the need to advance it. Also they reviewed bilateral ties.

Levy delays U.S. visit

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy has postponed a visit to the United States planned for later this week to deal with a sudden flare-up in tensions with the Palestinians, officials said on Sunday. Mr. Levy had been due to hold talks in Washington beginning Wednesday with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Vice President Al Gore. A foreign ministry official said the visit had been postponed, but provided no new date. The trip was scheduled to follow official visits to Washington by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who was due to meet President Bill Clinton on Monday.

Yemen departs 3,000 foreigners

SANAA (R) — Yemen has deported more than 18,000 illegal aliens since it launched a crackdown on unlawful immigration in August 1995, Yemen's interior minister said in remarks published on Sunday. "We are still following up on violators," Hussein Mohammedi Arab told the official Al Thawra newspaper. "Anyone who enters Yemen has to respect the law and his entry has to be legal." Yemen's crackdown on illegal residents mostly targeted Somalis, Eritreans and Ethiopians. Officials say it has helped reduce crime. Officials say many of the illegal foreigners had come to Yemen in the period between 1990, when north and south Yemen merged, and during the civil war of 1994.

Turkish troops kill 42 Kurdish rebels

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — Turkish troops, backed by airpower, have killed 42 Kurdish rebels in the rugged terrain close to the border with Iraq, regional authorities said Sunday. The offensives were carried out in the last three days in Sinak province, with warplanes striking at suspected rebel hideouts along the border. The rebels keep bases in northern Iraq to launch hit-and-run attacks.

UAE women urged to take part in politics

ABU DHABI (AFP) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) women ended two days of talks on Sunday with a call for females in the country to break social barriers and take part in politics. The women, who held a symposium to mark International Women's Day, proposed more meetings to draw up plans for involvement in politics, the official news agency WAM reported. The symposium supported a call by the UAE president's wife, Sheikhha Fatima Bint Mubarak, for local women to join the Federal National Council (FNC) or the appointed parliament, it quoted a statement as saying. "The women should also chalk out programmes and concepts to guide them into their expected political activity," the statement said.

King orders measures to ensure independence of judiciary

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday instructed the government to take measures that guarantee the independence of the judiciary and to improve the judges' living conditions by granting them special allowances. In a letter to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, the King said these measures should be taken as soon as possible to ensure that "the judicial system in Jordan continues to serve as a model of integrity and independence and capable of shouldering its responsibilities."

"Our judicial system has always enjoyed our confidence and appreciation for its noble mission and we have always believed in serving justice and the rule of the law in our society," said King Hussein. Stressing the need for the judiciary to pursue its mission with integrity and independence from any other authority, the King said: "The judicial system should be made to attract qualified and competent judges who work conscientiously and bear their responsibilities with objectivity and courage, rising above any personal whims and material desires."

The King stressed the need for the government to take quick action to increase allowances for the judges, stressing that pensions of judges who completed 30 years in service should not exceed their present salaries if they continue in their jobs; otherwise judges will be encouraged to quit their jobs and work as lawyers. The King said that there was need for an amended law on courts covering such questions as court fees, with some of the revenues to be used to improve the judges' salaries.

The King also called on the government to facilitate the training of judges at the Judicial Institute where training should be done by judges and not academics. King Hussein said that to ensure cooperation among the executive, legislative and judicial authorities the government should consult with the Judicial Council on the legality of draft laws before submitting them to Parliament. King Hussein said he was keen on the independence of the judicial system and improvement of the judges' living standards so that they dedicate all their time and effort to their noble mission in a relaxed atmosphere.

In his message the King asked that the prime minister convey his greetings to and appreciation of the judges and the cadres employed in the judicial service. In September, judges from the Supreme Court and the Court of Cassation submitted their resignations but later withdrew them after the government pledged to meet their demands and improve their working and living conditions.

The judges had demanded that the government introduce measures to enhance the independence of the judiciary, amend legislation related to judiciary work and reform laws in a manner that would ensure a comprehensive health insurance system for the judges and their families. All 23 judges had more than 25 years of service with the judiciary and at the time had a legal prerogative to opt for retirement.

Angry Palestinian negotiators reject limited Israeli deployment decision

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Top Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held an unscheduled meeting Sunday amid Palestinian furor over Israel's limited offer to extend self-rule in the West Bank and plans to build more Jewish settlements in Arab East Jerusalem.

Foreign Minister David Levy requested the meeting earlier Sunday with Mahmoud Abbas, the top deputy to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, in a bid to ensure that the Palestinian frustrations do not derail recently resumed peace negotiations, an Israeli official said.

Mr. Levy was accompanied to the talks at a Jerusalem hotel by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet secretary, Danny Naveh, while the Palestinian delegation included senior negotiators Saeb Erakat and Hassan Asfour. Mr. Erakat said the Palestinians were to submit a formal protest over Israel's unilateral decision on Friday to transfer only an additional nine per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian rule under the next phase of the autonomy process.

The Palestinians say the handover, the first of three Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank scheduled to be carried out over the next 18 months, should have involved at least 30 per cent of the occupied territory. "We will present an official letter containing our refusal of the new phase of the Israeli troop redeployment," Mr. Erakat told AFP before the meeting.

Mr. Erakat said that the 1995 Oslo interim peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians required bilateral consultations on the scope and nature of the redeployments. "These unilateral acts violate the agreements and are attempts to dictate conditions" to the Palestinians, he said.

The Palestinians were also expected to reiterate their opposition to Israeli plans to build at Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem. An Israeli official said Sunday that construction at the site would begin later this week despite Palestinian warnings this would spark bloodshed.

Mr. Levy and Mr. Abbas head the joint Israeli-Palestinian committee overseeing negotiations on implementation of the interim peace accord and Sunday's meeting was also due to take stock of progress made since the talks resumed last month, an Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said.

Nine committees of negotiators have been wrangling over issues including the opening of Palestinian air and sea ports in the Gaza Strip and the creation of "safe passage" corridors between self-rule areas. Earlier Sunday Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai met with senior Israeli army officials to finalise the map for the first phase of further troop withdrawals and toured West Bank areas due to be transferred to the Palestinians.

"The redeployment could take place on Tuesday or Wednesday. All the parties involved, including Jewish settlers, must be ready to cooperate so that there are no problems," Mr. Mordechai told reporters. "The detailed plans will be submitted to me tomorrow for my approval, and immediately after that the redeployment will begin," Mr. Mordechai told reporters.

"We can do it in a very short time," he added. "I think in two to three days the army will complete all the redeployment in the area." Mr. Mordechai said he was in constant contact with the Palestinians and Jewish settlers who live in the West Bank to ensure that there will be no violence when the redeployment is carried out.

The plan was being reviewed Sunday with settlers and security agencies "to see that there is no weak point whatsoever that we haven't thought about," Mr. Mordechai said. "If there is, we will try to solve it now." According to the Maariv and Yediot Achronot newspapers, the redeployment will include villages north-east of Jenin, in the northern West Bank, the university town of Bir Zeit north of Ramallah, a village west of Bethlehem, and villages south of Hebron.

Mr. Mordechai said the land to be handed over was not essential for Israel and would not endanger the settlements. The first phase of the withdrawal was only narrowly approved by the Combined Agency dispatches.

THE U.S. veto of a United Nations Security Council resolution criticising Israel for its settlement plans in Arab East Jerusalem came under fire on Sunday from the Arab World as well as Iran.

A Saudi-owned newspaper urged Arab countries to boycott American products, including weapons, in retaliation for the U.S. veto. Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, said in a speech televised nationwide in Iran that the veto showed America's "global arrogance."

The United States on Friday cast the single "no" vote against a European-sponsored resolution in the U.N. Security Council critical of Israel's plan to build a Jewish settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem.

A commentary in the Saudi-owned Al Hayat newspaper asked: "Why do we buy weapons from the United States with a high price at the time it offers as a gift better (weapons) than that to Israel?" "Why don't the buying Arab countries agree ... not to buy any American weapon for two or five years so that the United States realises it cannot humiliate the Arabs?"

The front-page column was signed by Al Hayat's editor, Jihad Al Khazin. It accused the United States of a pro-Israel policy and urged a boycott of all U.S.-made goods.

"If the suggestion to stop buying American weapons is limited, there is a general suggestion to boycott all American goods," it said. Such a boycott, it argued, would force the United States to "suffer from the same means it uses against Iraq, Iran, Cuba and any country that opposes its policy."

Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, are heavy buyers of U.S. military equipment as well as civilian products, such as passenger jets and food. Ayatollah Khamenei's comments came in a speech Sunday in the southern Iranian town of Abadan. Listeners greeted his remarks with chants of "Death to America."

He told the crowd: "This is one of the Security Council's rare just resolutions, but it is vetoed by the bullying, ignorant and brutal United States. This is what we mean by global arrogance." In Damascus, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said: "Of course we weren't surprised by it because the United States has been trying for some time to prevent the Security Council taking any position against Israel's settlement and expansion policy."

"The American attitude is condemned by the Arab and Islamic World," said Mr. Sharaa, speaking to reporters as he welcomed Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati who arrived here Sunday for a short visit.

Mr. Sharaa said the veto against the European resolution was unprecedented and he paid tribute to "the just position of the European states in the peace process."

Mr. Velayati said Washington's action was only to be expected "because the United States supports all Israel's inhumane and illegitimate activities." He said the veto should be "a lesson to Islamic countries who still carry delusions, in order that they combine their efforts to free Jerusalem."

Mr. Velayati called for an Islamic summit on the Jerusalem issue, which will be at the centre of Israeli-Palestinian talks on the final status of Palestinian territories. Iraq's Al Thawra newspaper said "the American veto shows Washington's contempt for international law, the United Nations charter and the wishes of the international community."

Babel newspaper, run by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, slammed U.S. backing for Israel's policy and said Washington could not be an impartial sponsor of the Middle East peace process. "The enemy (the United States) cannot at the same time be a referee," said the paper, adding that "America will never accept any measure capable of harming Zionist interests."

Arafat ends visit after another round of talks with King on peace process, Jordanian-Palestinian coordination

AMMAN (J.T.) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat left Amman on Sunday after an overnight visit to Jordan during which he held talks with His Majesty King Hussein on the latest developments in the Middle East peace process and Israel's measures in Arab East Jerusalem.

The King, who held talks with Mr. Arafat Saturday evening, met the Palestinian leader again Sunday morning at Al Nadwa Palace to continue talks on issues related to the Middle East peace process, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The two leaders agreed to intensify efforts at all levels to overcome difficulties facing the peace process in the region, to maintain coordination and consultation and to step up contacts with influential countries to advance the peace process, Petra said.

Arabs, Iran slam U.S. veto of U.N. resolution criticising Israel

Combined Agency dispatches

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His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday presents a replica of Al Aqsa Mosque to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat (photo by Meldos)

King Hussein reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinians' efforts to restore their legitimate rights on their national soil and establish a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and the Palestinian delegation accompanying President Arafat.

King Hussein presented President Arafat a replica of Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock.

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It's the Final Count Down
for the
Grand Opening
of
Y?????????
Theme Restaurant & Bar



UNREST IN WEST BANK: An Israeli soldier raises his wooden club as he and another soldier lead away a Palestinian young man on Sunday as they arrest the Palestinian for stone-throwing during clashes north of Hebron (Reuters photo)

Churches for Middle East Peace group calls for world action to foil Israeli plan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Churches for Middle East Peace, a Washington D.C.-based organization, is calling for international action to foil Israel's plan to build a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem by pressuring the United States to influence Israel.

The call was the first by an American church organization against the Israeli decision last month to build the so-called Har Homa "neighbourhood" on Jabal Abu Ghneim in the southern outskirts of Arab East Jerusalem.

It was issued before the U.S. on Friday vetoed a European-sponsored U.N. Security Council resolution criticising Israel.

In a message entitled "special action alert," Churches for Middle East Peace warned that the Israeli decision to build a 6,500-housing unit on Jabal Abu Ghneim could derail the Middle East peace process.

"Pressed by his coalition's right wing, (Israeli) Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu made the decision despite many warnings," said the message, which appeared on the Internet.

It noted that the head of Israel's Shin Bet security agency had warned that "construction in Jerusalem can arouse fierce and unpredictable protest"

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat "cannot control," and that Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini of Jerusalem had also stated that any Israeli settlement project on Jabal Abu Ghneim would effectively kill the Oslo process.

Churches for Middle East Peace is asking everyone to write to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson as well as letters for publications in the local newspapers.

According to Churches for Middle East Peace, the points that should be made in the messages and letters should be:

"The U.S. government should insist that Israel not begin construction of a new Jewish neighbourhood, Har Homa, in East Jerusalem. As the primary sponsor of the peace process, the United States has a responsibility to dissuade Israel from this action which would provoke violence and jeopardise prospects of Palestinian-Israeli peace."

"Israeli construction of a new Jewish neighbourhood in East Jerusalem preempts the Oslo agreement's final-status negotiations by creating facts-on-the-ground. The construction of Har Homa, and all Israeli settlements, violates international law such as the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit the movement of populations into conquered territory."

"Stopping the building of 'Har Homa' is of particular importance to the Palestinian Christian city of Bethlehem and the international Christian community. Har Homa would cut off Jerusalem's Arab-populated areas from Bethlehem."

"The United States must not veto a Security Council resolution on Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim. The U.S. should stand with the international community in opposing Israel's decision to build Har Homa in East Jerusalem."

Churches for Middle East Peace noted that Jabal Abu Ghneim, the proposed site for Har Homa, is home to a variety of wildlife.

Close to Bethlehem and Beit Sahour, the Abu Ghneim area is believed by some to be the biblical "Shepherds' Field," it said, pointing out that the site abounds with Christian holy sites, including St. Timothy's Well and 5th and 6th century Byzantine monasteries and churches such as Bir Qadismu, which marks the place where Mary dismounted before giving birth to Jesus.

"Palestinian Christians and the Middle East Council of Churches have led the international Christian community in focusing opposition to Israeli settlements on this specific case," it said.

"The political significance of preventing the building of Har Homa is profound, for both Jerusalem and settlements

are final status issues yet to be negotiated," said Churches for Middle East Peace.

"Israel to build a new exclusively-Jewish neighbourhood on land that historically was Palestinian and whose sovereignty is subject to negotiation, is a slap in the face of the peace process. It is a deliberate attempt to strengthen Israel's hold on occupied parts of Jerusalem by altering its physical and demographic status."

Noting that the proposed settlement will sever the natural link between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the organization also said there was "concern in Bethlehem that Christian tourists, the principal source of income in Bethlehem, would be rerouted to Har Homa, the so-called Bethlehem of Israel."

Writing in the Washington Post of March 2, correspondent Barton Gellman dismissed Mr. Netanyahu's remarks about also building new housing for Arabs.

His report notes that of the 38,500 apartments built on expropriated land in East Jerusalem since 1968, none has been built for Arabs. The number of building permits approved for Palestinians has averaged only three per year, all in Arab neighbourhoods and limited to two stories. A former official of the Jerusalem municipality calls the promise of Palestinian housing "a joke."

Mubarak says peace process is in difficult phase but not crumbling

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak arrived in Washington Saturday for a six-day visit aimed at relaunching the Mideast peace process.

Mr. Mubarak arrived at nearby Andrews Air Force Base at approximately 1 p.m. (1800 GMT) from Paris, where he met briefly with French President Jacques Chirac.

Mr. Mubarak's last visit to Washington was in the spring of 1996, before Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in June, grinding the peace process to a halt.

Besides the Mideast peace process, Mr. Mubarak will discuss his economic policy, which since 1991 has been committed to a vast privatisation programme, and make efforts to boost American investment, currently around \$1.4 billion and mainly in oil and gas exploration. In Paris, Mr. Mubarak said after talks with President Chirac that the Middle East peace process was going through a tough period but was not on the verge of crumbling.

Mr. Mubarak told reporters after dinner at Mr. Chirac's Elysee Palace late on Friday: "One cannot say that the peace process threatens to collapse. It is true that it is going through a difficult phase."

Mr. Mubarak said that the issue of peace in the Middle East had been on the agenda for the past 50 years and could not be resolved quickly. "It is certainly going to face several problems, but with goodwill we're going to succeed," he said.

Mr. Chirac told reporters he had once again noted that Egypt and France saw eye-to-eye on bilateral, regional and peace process issues, and world and especially African questions.

"Everything that President Mubarak said, I could have said," Mr. Chirac added.

A Chirac spokesman said that the attitude towards new Jewish settlements of Mr. Netanyahu, whom Mr. Mubarak met on Wednesday in Cairo, prompted concern on his commitment to the peace process.

French officials said Mr. Mubarak had agreed in principle to return to France for a state visit at an unspecified date.

In Washington, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said on Friday that Israeli actions had "gravely affected" the credibility of the peace process, creating an atmosphere of pessimism.

In a speech on the eve of Mr. Mubarak's visit, Mr. Musa said Egypt looked to the United States to play an "active role" as honest broker to get the process back on track.

Philippines ambassador to UAE seeks pardon for death-row man

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Philippines ambassador in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said on Sunday he was fighting to secure clemency for a Filipino facing the death penalty for murder.

Roy Seneres said Filipinos had already raised funds for the defendant, John Acquino, to pay blood money to the Indian victim's relatives if they agreed to drop their demand for the death penalty under Islamic law.

"We have located those relatives in Britain and are making contacts to meet them. I am ready to go myself to see them if they allow me," he told AFP.

"I really understand their feelings... There is still pain in this case. But I only want a chance to talk to them to say that it was not a cold-blood murder considering the circumstances of the incident."

Acquino has pleaded guilty to stabbing his Indian colleague Harjain Singh to death and injuring another Indian with a kitchen knife during a drinking spree in the northern city of Ajman in 1989. But he insisted he acted in self-defence as he felt threatened by the two.

He was sentenced to death by a lower court and his appeal was rejected by higher court, prompting him to

appeal to the Federal Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court in Abu Dhabi on Saturday gave his lawyer until June 7 to try to persuade Harjain's Sikh relatives to cancel a letter they had earlier sent to the court demanding the execution of Acquino.

"We have already raised the funds in case the victim's relatives accepted blood money. The money has been collected in the Philippines," Mr. Seneres said.

He said he had contacted the Indian ambassador in the UAE, who promised to help. Mr. Seneres said he had managed to locate the victim's next of kin in Birmingham through official channels, adding that he was awaiting word from officials there on whether he could meet the relatives.

Under Islamic law, relatives of a murdered person can either demand the death penalty or forgive the killer and accept diyya (blood money), which was doubled in the UAE three years ago to 150,000 dirhams (\$41,800).

Acquino's lawyer, Badarwi Nur, said it was up to the Supreme Court to decide on the imprisonment of the defendant if it was settled by diyya.



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is greeted on his arrival at Andrews Air Force Base on Saturday for talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton and other U.S. officials (Reuters photo)

U.N. veto puts U.S. at odds with allies

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.S. veto of a European resolution criticising Israel for its settlement policy is unlikely to achieve the stated U.S. goal of cooling Middle East rhetoric at a time when compromise is needed.

Instead, it has put Washington at odds with some of its closest allies and has widened the rift between Israel and the European Union (EU), which is increasingly wary of deferring to Washington on Middle East issues and is anxious for a greater role in the peace process.

The U.S. action appears unlikely to calm the international storm over Israel's plan to construct a 6,500-unit Jewish settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem.

Arab diplomats said they would ask for an emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly, during which speakers from throughout the world will doubtless single out Israel for threatening Middle East peace.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who visited U.N. headquarters last Wednesday, said the U.S. veto was "a completely wrong decision" because the international community needed to apply "strong discipline" against the Israelis.

U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson cast the only negative vote Friday night when the 15-member council considered a resolution, submitted by Britain, France, Portugal and Sweden.

The resolution called on Israel to "refrain from all actions or measures" that "alter the facts on the ground" or prejudice future talks on the status of Jerusalem. It also urged Israel to "abide scrupulously" by its obligations under

international law. Mr. Richardson said the Israel decision "undermines the trust and confidence so badly needed in creating the appropriate environment for successful negotiations."

"We should not be under the illusion that that council action to lay blame on one party or the other... is the right way to go about achieving peace," Mr. Richardson said.

It was only the third time since the end of the cold war that the United States has used its council veto. After the end of the cold war, the five permanent members — the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China — agreed to use the veto sparingly.

The chairman of the Arab group of U.N. ambassadors, Nasser Ben Hamad Al Khalifa, said the Arabs and non-aligned countries would ask the general assembly to consider the settlements issue.

"In view of the failure of the council to fulfil its obligations, we would request from the members of the United Nations to agree to a meeting of the General Assembly in an emergency session... and to take the appropriate action in this regard," said the Palestine's U.N. representative, Nasser Al Kidwa.

No country has a veto in the General Assembly but its resolution are non-binding. Nevertheless, the general assembly provides a public stage for countries to denounce Israel, a move which U.S. diplomats fear will harden positions at a time when compromise is needed.

The vote came after the United States failed to convince the rest of the council to drop a binding resolution in favour of a non-binding statement.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Flintstones
14:30 Cartoon — Captain Planet
15:00 French Programmes
16:00 Nature's Inventions
16:30 Deep Water Haven
17:00 News Flash
17:02 Doc. — Extra Dimensions
18:00 French Programmes
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Roseanne
20:00 Doc. — Discover Magazine
20:30 Drama — Murder She Wrote
21:10 Extreme
22:00 News in English
22:25 Under Suspicion
23:00 Police Drama — Hunter

PRAYER TIMES

04:32 Fajr
05:49 (Sunrise) Doha
11:46 Dhuhur
18:07 'Asr
17:43 Maghreb
19:00 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel.

661757 Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise. Skies will be sunny to partly cloudy and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp. Amman 02/1

Aqaba 08/21

Deserts 01/17

Jordan Valley 07/22

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 19 Humidity readings: Amman 44 per cent, Aqaba 38 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197

Dr. Afif Shukri 898863

Dr. Nidal Dahleh 827195

Dr. Osama Al Hussein 847289

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Nairookh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Raif Attallah 994424

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Res-

cue 630

341

Civil Defence Emer-

gency 199

Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 396390

Public Security Dept. 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101

Al Hikma Modern Hospital 773111

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

J. Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Co. 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity 644281/6

Akileh Maternity 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman

636140 Palestine, Shmeisani

607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhtaj 777101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09/983323

Zarqa National Hospital 09/900560

Ibn Sina Hospital 09/986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09/990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital 02/275555

Greek Catholic Hospital 02/27275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital 02/247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital 03/314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information

department at the Queen Alia

International Airport Tel.

(03)3200-5, where it should

always be verified. Information on

other flights can be supplied on

phone 08 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 Sanaa (RJ)

08:35 Jeddah (RJ)

08:55 Damascus (RJ)

09:45 New Delhi (RJ)

09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:05 Beirut (RJ)

16:20 Cairo (RJ)

16:25 London (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

19:05 Bangkok (RJ)

22:20 Casablanca (RJ)

23:00 Garwick, Aqaba (add) (RJ)

03:40 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights

05:45 Khartoum (SD)

Queen departs for conference in Geneva

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday left for Geneva to attend a meeting of the Mentor Foundation's board of trustees to convene today.

The board collects donations for voluntary organisations and meets twice a year, the last time in Cairo last September.

The Queen is scheduled to attend a fund-raising dinner in which board members and 300 invited guests will also participate.

Following the Geneva meeting, the Queen will leave Monday for Paris where she will open the "Jordanian Cultural Season" with the wife of the French president.

The Parisian event is designed to familiarise Europeans with Jordanian cultural attractions.

The Ministry of Tourism is organising the Parisian event in cooperation with the French government, Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), and Royal Jordanian (RJ).

His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and HRH Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein saw the Queen off.

Jordan dispatches medical, food supplies to Sudan

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Sunday dispatched a plane of relief supplies to victims of conflict in southern Sudan.

The supplies were contributed by Jordanian organisations and individuals through a campaign organised by the Hashemite Charity Organisation (HCO).

HRH Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein, HCO Secretary General and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi as well as Sudanese Ambassador to Jordan Omar Abdul Rahman dispatched the plane which was loaded with medicine, medical equipment and other basic relief aid.

Dr. Abbadi described the plane as carrying nearly 17 tonnes of relief supplies to Sudan, adding that contri-

butions might still be made and that the HCO intends to ensure aid shipments to Sudan through various channels.

He thanked the Jordanian public for their contributions.

The relief supplies to Sudan serve as a link in a long chain of Jordanian assistance to Sudan in implementation of His Majesty King Hussein's directives, Dr. Abbadi stated.

He maintained that the HCO has opened special accounts at the Islamic, Arab and Housing banks for cash contributions to the Sudanese people and will continue to receive in-kind donations through Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs departments in the Kingdom.

Minister opens vocational orientation workshop

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for HRH Princess Basma, Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour Sunday opened a vocational orientation workshop for 10th grade girls, held at the Teachers Club in Amman.

Addressing the workshop, organised by the Jordan National Forum for Women (JNFW) to mark International Women's Day, Dr. Ensour praised Princess Basma's role in advancing the status of women, saying that her ongoing support was behind the success of Jordanian women, particularly in the political arena.

The minister stressed the importance of vocational education in developing national economies and called for reviewing vocational training programmes to bring them in line with international standards.

Dr. Ensour also emphasised the role the JNFW plays in promoting aware-

ness among young women about vocational education and encouraging them to select vocational specialisations which appeal to them.

Also Sunday Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughmi deputised for Princess Basma in opening a workshop on women's political participation, held at the Princess Basma Centre for Women's Affairs.

The workshop was organised by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) coordination committee, also on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Addressing the workshop, Mr. Dughmi deemed necessary that women participate in the political process in order to enable them to be part of decision-making bodies and add their knowledge and opinion on social and economic issues affecting the country.

Population displacement conference aims to boost regional cooperation

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — High-level consultations among government representatives of the Central Asia, Southwest Asia and the Middle East (CASWAME) regions on involuntary population displacements will take place here this week as part of a UN effort to promote regional cooperation in addressing the plight of refugees and displaced persons.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata is scheduled to participate in the March 12-13 meeting, to be attended by ministers and high-ranking officials from 14 countries.

The meeting comes ahead of the final status negotiations of the Middle East peace process and amid growing concerns over the settlement of four million Palestinian refugees and displaced persons.

Exposed to consistent migratory waves, from the time of the first Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 to the more recent Gulf war, with its ensuing wave of around 300,000 "returnees" to the Kingdom from Kuwait and other Gulf countries as well as many thousands of Iraqis, Jordan has a particular interest in the upcoming conference.

Though the UNHCR does not deal with the majority of Palestinian refugees, which fall under the care of another U.N. organisation, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Jordan is expected to reiterate its stand on the issue of refugees and displaced persons, based on the enforcement of the "right of return or compensation," as upheld by U.N. Security Council Resolution 194 of 1949.

While UNRWA, established in 1949, deals with the problems refugees face in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank and Gaza, the UNHCR, founded in 1951, deals with Palestinian refugees outside these areas.

As an example, the UNHCR intervened in last year's expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from Libya by Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, who were then denied entry to Egypt by the Egyptian government.

The Amman meeting will also address "the unprecedented emergencies of the humanitarian problem of

refugees and displaced persons in the region," UNHCR Representative in Amman Zobida Hassim-Ashagrie said.

A list of participants has not yet been disclosed for security reasons, but the conference is expected to lay the foundation for an institutionalised and effective cooperation in refugees and displacement matters.

"The Amman conference will set the tone for a dialogue among governments and aims at initiating a regional cooperation mechanism to contain and prevent displacements," Ms. Hassim-Ashagrie told the Jordan Times in an interview on Sunday.

Since the 1979 Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which sent six million refugees to Iran and Pakistan, a series of international and civil wars has hit the CASWAME region challenging the governments with "unprecedented humanitarian emergencies," Ms. Hassim-Ashagrie noted.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was followed by the 1980-1988 war between Iraq and Iran, the 1990 Gulf war, which displaced two million people, and the 1992 civil war in Tajikistan.

"Especially in Central Asia, there exists a need for building the states' capacity, in terms of legal and judicial systems, to respond to the flow of displaced persons and refugees," Ms. Hassim-Ashagrie said, adding that "regional cooperation is crucial to address this humanitarian problem."

"Half a million Iraqis in Jordan and elsewhere, are still awaiting a solution," she added.

Along with other five Middle Eastern countries and Turkey, Jordan will present its national report in the afternoon session of the first day of the meeting, scheduled to be opened with key-note addresses by HRH Crown Prince Hassan and Ms. Ogata.

The agenda of the meeting's second day includes discussions on "asylum in Islamic tradition" and a concluding session "to identify problems and propose future actions," Ms. Hassim-Ashagrie said.

Established in 1951, the Geneva-based UNHCR, with more than 5,000 personnel in 120 countries, is providing aid to 26.1 million refugees, displaced persons, internally displaced persons and returnees.

Court postpones case of young men accused of killing former schoolmate

AMMAN — The Amman Criminal Court last week postponed the case of two youths suspected of killing a 15-year-old boy in the Hashemi Al Shamali district of Amman in September of 1995. The case will resume on March 27.

Ala' Abu Sumaya, a 10th grade student at Kutbeibeh School, was apparently killed on Sept. 25 in a brawl which erupted during a school break.

Wassim Jaber and Sa'ed Nakhleh, both 18, are standing trial at the Amman Criminal Court on charges of manslaughter.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, the two pummeled Mr. Abu Sumaya during a school break, causing him to fall.

The two defendants were arrested Sept. 25, first detained in Usama Bin Zeid Juvenile Centre and later transferred to Jevideh prison.

The boys were in 12th grade at the time and have missed three semesters of school since.

"I have tried repeatedly and unsuccessfully to release the youths on bail so they might finish their school year and graduate," Defence Attorney Issa Abu Fidah said.

Mr. Abu Fidah said that since October 1995, the court

heard seven witnesses in the case, including a forensic expert and that another seven witnesses are yet to testify.

"Forensic expert, Mansour Ma'ayah, testified in court that Ala' died of a virus which damaged his heart muscle and that the fight was unrelated to his death," Mr. Abu Fidah said.

He added that the testimony of the forensic expert could be used as evidence to acquit his clients and on that basis he has appealed for bail several times without success.

Conflicting reports concerning the incident sent shock waves through the Jordanian community.

Sources said at the time that Ala', one of a thousand students at the school, left for recess at approximately 10:25 a.m.

By 10:30, he was on his way to Al Bashir Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival, official sources said.

Students at the school informed the Jordan Times that Ala' was assaulted by a group of twelfth graders. Reasons for the assault were never clarified by the authorities.

HRH Crown Prince visited the Abu Sumaya family in October to offer his condolences. — R.H.

Premier covers health issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Sunday met with Minister of Health Aref Bataineh.

The prime minister called for tenders to be announced to set up several hospitals in different parts of the country, including a children's hospital in Amman, general hospitals in Wadi Mousa and Bani Kanana and the Prince Hamzeh Hospital.

He also requested that the ministry upgrade the performance of food and medical laboratories through advanced training in international institutes.

Dr. Bataineh inaugurated "dental health day," organised by the Jordan Dental Association (JDA) as well as a symposium on prevention, organised by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Royal Medical Services, the faculties of dentistry at the University of Jordan and Yarmouk University, the United Nations Relief and Works Association (UNRWA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Kabariti, Lawzi meet with visiting Lebanese minister of transport

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Sunday reviewed the general situation in the Middle East as well as the latest developments in the peace process with visiting Lebanese Minister of Transport Omar Mithqawi.

Mr. Kabariti expressed his hope that a lasting settlement would be achieved on all fronts.

The prime minister emphasised that Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-Syrian negotiations must be resumed in order to achieve peace.

Jordan backs U.N. resolutions regarding Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity, he said.

Regional and international efforts should be made to end the deadlock in the peace process, incited by Israel's settlement policy, Mr. Kabariti added.

During the meeting, attended by Transport Minister Naser Lawzi, the two sides emphasised mutual cooperation and focused upon the transport sector.

The Lebanese minister expressed his country's desire to promote relations

and cooperation with the Kingdom and told Jordan Television that Lebanon and Jordan are linked by trade and transport agreements.

"Due to global developments, both countries must draft new formulas for future cooperation in trade and transport," he added. Earlier Sunday, Jordan and Lebanon signed an agreement regarding mutual cooperation in maritime transport and seaport development.

The agreement, signed by Messrs. Lawzi and Mithqawi, stipulates joint efforts to promote sea navigation and maritime transport.

It also covers a strategy for integrating their respective commercial fleet operations to serve bilateral trade.

The agreement also stipulates that both parties work towards removing barriers in maritime transport, coordinate inspection, vessel guidance and maritime rescue operations, combat pollution and protect marine ecology as well as exchange information regarding maritime-related

issues. Lebanon and Jordan also agreed to adopt a joint stand at regional and international conferences on maritime affairs as well as in training cadres on seaport operations and maintaining and refurbishing vessels.

Subsequent to the agreement's ratification, Mr. Lawzi described the deal as initiating close cooperation between the two countries.

He maintained that the countries will also explore other areas of transport in order to facilitate transit operations, transport of both goods and people as well as cooperation between the seaports of Aqaba and Beirut.

The agreement will regulate transport operations between the two countries, the minister added, and both sides have agreed to form joint committees to remove all possible barriers to the implementation of the new agreement.

The Lebanese minister arrived Saturday night for a three-day visit to the Kingdom and is expected to hold further talks with Jordanian officials.

Politicians state women must politicise themselves, widen focus and organise

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Politicians Saturday said that the improvement of women's status in Jordan will not be accomplished unless women politicise themselves and work on reaching decision-making positions.

"Women's roles in political parties are limited to calling for their rights and equality and, because they are not politicised, their chances of occupying leading positions in party life is limited," Senator Na'ela Rashdan said in a paper entitled "Women and Political Parties."

Ms. Rashdan spoke during a lecture entitled "Women and Civil Society," held and organised by the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (AHSF) and the National Jordanian Committee for Women (NJCW).

She maintained that one of the reasons that women's presence in the political parties is minor, is their lesser influence in establishing committees of political parties.

A recent study conducted on the current 17 political parties revealed that women represent only five per cent of the establishing members, she said.

Out of a total of 2,184 members, including 110 women, Ms. Rashdan stated, some parties had no women founders in its committees while others did include women founders ranging from one to sixteen.

"This is due to the social beliefs of women themselves as well as their lack of experience from within the parties," she stated.

Deputy Toujan Faisal described as essential to have better women representation in Parliament, "if [women] want to improve their status and make change."

"The House holds a sensitive position as it gives women the chance to vote for or against the government and achieve changes,"

Ms. Faisal said. "This cannot be accomplished unless women are politicised."

She added that reaching Parliament will help women achieve top positions in political parties, unions, municipalities and other decision-making positions.

However, Ms. Faisal strongly criticised the one-person, one-vote system

Faisal said.

Salim Zou'by, a former deputy and minister, presented a paper entitled "Political and Constitutional Rights for Women," in which he affirmed that women must participate politically and socially as "an essential condition to develop and liberate our society."

He added that the biggest

THE JORDANIAN Women's Coalition (JWC) Saturday made a formal request that members of the Jordanian mission to the United Nations vote in favour of implementing the Beijing Conference on Women recommendations.

In a letter to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, the JWC asked the premier to urge the mission's delegates to attend the UN Central Women's Committee (CWC) meeting scheduled to convene today in New York and vote for the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.

The JWC also requested that the delegates attend the Human Rights Committee (HRC) meeting in Geneva on April 10.

The letter said that the CWC priorities for 1997 will be women and the environment, women in decision-making positions, women and economy and women and education and rehabilitation.

Also Saturday, in support of International Women's Day, the Jordan Society for Human Rights (JSHR), issued a statement congratulating women in Jordan as well as those around the world on the occasion.

The group added that it congratulates three women who won seats in the municipal council elections in the north of Jordan.

It also called on the Jordanian government to abide by a U.N. declaration on ending all forms of discrimination against women.

Further, it called for forming a new civil status law in line with international agreements and conventions, "as some of the articles in the current law do not protect women's rights, especially those of working women and rights in divorce settlements."

The organisation called for amending Article 340 of the Penal Code which protects killers in crimes of honour, and for amending the Citizenship Law to ensure gender equality.

(recently passed by Parliament) which, she said, lessens women's chances of reaching the House.

She called for establishing a constitutional court to tackle this issue stating that women's political work is a national obligation "and they have the right to discuss and participate in political life."

"The issue is not women's rights, but rather national rights, because half of our energies (women) are not functioning and we want women in all fields and professions," Ms.

challenge for both men and women is to fight for accomplishing a democracy which would guarantee human rights and improve living conditions.

Dr. Zou'by stated that the issue of political enfranchisement is not merely a women's issue but rather an issue which concerns the society as a whole.

"Women should insist on obtaining their rights, because rights which are obtained by struggle are those which last," Dr. Zou'by stressed.

Former Prime Minister

and Deputy Taher Masri moderated the lecture and said that men are also to be blamed for gender-related injustices.

"We live in a male dominated society, and the burden falls on our society to change some existing beliefs in order to push ahead," Deputy Masri said.

Former Minister of Agriculture Suleiman Arabiat said in a paper on "Women and Professional Unions" that in a study conducted on ten professional associations, women only represented 18 per cent of the total membership.

He said that women do not occupy leadership positions in the unions, "due to social restrictions imposed against them."

"Women should form pressure groups within their unions and collaborate if they want to reach top positions," he said.

General Director of AHSF Ibrahim Izzidin said that now the 21st century is approaching, we "must invest in the other half of the society if we want to achieve advancements in scientific, political, economic, social and cultural fields."

He added that although women have made several successful achievements in the past, "this is not enough because women are still far from creating their future."

"Women's presence in parliamentary life and decision-making positions is either symbolic or non-existent," he said.

Secretary General of the NJCW Hiam Kalimat described the lecture as part of implementing phase two of the NJCW strategy which focuses on the importance of women's participation in political life.

"The aim of this meeting is to exchange views with experts, politicians and intellectuals on ways and means to accomplish our goals," she said.

The conference was held to mark International Women's Day.

What's Going On

FIFTH THEATRE FESTIVAL

* Two plays entitled "The Revolt of the Blacks" and "Media" at the Royal Cultural Centre respectively at 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

CONCERT

* Performance by Severacek Girls Choir at the University of Jordan, Al Hassan Ben Talal Auditorium at 8:00 p.m.

FILM

* "Après la guerre" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, at 8:30 p.m.

LECTURE

* "The Tower of Babel: a Hypothesis of Reconstruction Between Myth and Reality" by Architect Roberto Farinati at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 699682).

EXHIBITIONS

* A UNHCR photo exhibition by Brazilian/French photographer Sebastiao Salgado at Forte Grand Hotel, until March 15.

* Works by Paris-based Syrian artist Ziad Dalloul at Darat Al Fajm, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 5. Also the playing works by contemporary Arab artists.

* Sculptures by Zaki Salim at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until March 15.

Zaire opposition plans next move after militants held

KINSHASA (R) — Zaire's main opposition party accused soldiers Saturday of mistreating seven of its leaders and militants detained for trying to march in the capital in support of peace talks with rebels in the east.

Laurent Mbayo, a leading member of the radical Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), told Reuters that the party leadership would meet to discuss their next move.

"We have done everything to see them but they only let one person in," Mr. Mbayo, a senior adviser of UDPS leader Etienne Tshisekedi, said of the seven detainees held by the civil guard since Friday morning.

"They have been undressed. They have been treated like animals," he added.

Those held include UDPS Secretary-General Adrien Phongo and leading party members Professor Mathieu Kakele, Olivier Kabango, and Modeste Sadiiki.

Troops intervened Friday to stop party militants demonstrating to demand talks

between rebel leader Laurent Kabila, ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko and Mr. Tshisekedi. Some militants said they planned to march for Mr. Mobutu to quit power.

Soldiers who guarded flashpoints in the teeming capital Friday had withdrawn by Saturday.

With the rebels gaining ground in the war zone in the east, poverty-stricken residents in Kinshasa's shanty towns openly expressed support for Mr. Kabila.

Some politicians who once sympathised with the government line that Mr. Kabila was a puppet of expansionist neighbours show signs of a change of heart.

"We said that we did not know Kabila the leader of the Tutsis. Now there has been an evolution and we recognise Kabila the Zairean. He is coming back home," said Sumaru Yamba Yamba, national secretary of the nationalist MNCL party.

The Tutsi-led rebels took up arms in October, accus-

ing the government of denying them citizenship and planning to expel them to Rwanda, their ancestral home.

Zaire accuses Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda of invading in support of the rebels. All deny helping the rebels.

The Zairean government has agreed to a U.N. ceasefire plan.

The rebel alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo has rejected international pressure for a ceasefire. It wants a transitional government in Zaire and elections.

The rebels are advancing on Kisangani, Zaire's third city and the headquarters of a now-stalled army counter-offensive.

Mr. Kabila says there can be no truce until Mr. Mobutu agrees to negotiate an end to his 31-year rule.

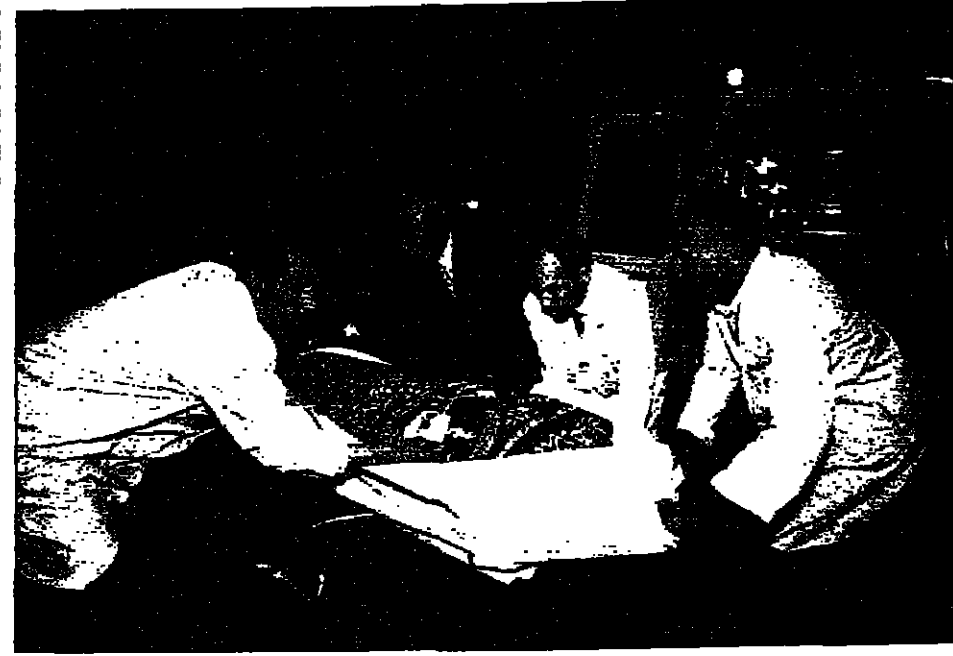
Mr. Mobutu, who is in France, had prostate cancer surgery in Europe in August. Since then he has spent most of his time in Europe, returning home only twice.

France called Saturday for a new meeting of the U.N. Security Council to study what action to take if a ceasefire called for by the United Nations fails to come into force in Zaire.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt urged Zairean rebels to accept a Council call for a ceasefire and said Xavier Emmanuelli, junior minister for emergency humanitarian action, would be despatched immediately to evaluate relief needs.

"We expect that all those who have an influence on the (rebel) Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) or on those who support it will take steps to ensure a rapid end to fighting," Mr. Rummelhardt said in a statement.

"If, despite the unanimous appeal which is launched today, there was no end to fighting soon, the Security Council should in our opinion be once again called to study necessary measures," he said.



Workers carry the coffin containing the body of the Moroccan-born nine-year old girl Loubna Benaissa into a truck upon its arrival in Tangier Sunday. The decomposed body of Loubna was found in a steel trunk in the cellar of a Brussels garage last week (Reuters photo)

Grief, anger sweeps Belgium during funeral of dead girl

BRUSSELS (R) — Grief and anger swept Belgium, shaken by paedophile scandals, as 20,000 people attended the funeral of a young girl found dead in the basement of a Brussels garage.

"My little Loubna. Our little Loubna, because you have become everyone's child. The child of a whole country," Nabila Benaissa, 17, the dead girl's sister, told the funeral ceremony. "Today pain unites us. Tomorrow I hope it will be love."

"Loubna, at last I can say goodbye to you. Goodbye in the name of all who love you," she said in an emotion-choked voice.

The body of Loubna Benaissa, aged nine when she disappeared in August 1992 while shopping for her mother, was discovered Wednesday in a steel trunk in the basement of a garage in the Brussels suburb of Ixelles where she lived.

Patrick Derocette, a convicted violent child molester who worked at the garage, has been charged with the abduction, rape of a child under 10 and illegal imprisonment leading to death.

A representative of King Albert attended the funeral, as did representatives of the government, the parents of the four other young girls who have been found dead since August and those of other children who are still missing.

"You are very strong and I embrace you very strongly," Marie-Noel Bouzet, the mother of Elizabeth Bricher who has been missing since December 1989, said fighting back tears and speaking directly to Loubna's parents.

Outside the Islamic Centre in central Brussels in the packed Cinquantenaire Park, the atmosphere was equally emotional but without any of the incidents police had feared after a mini-riot by Moroccan youths in Ixelles Thursday night.

"It is unbearable. We live in a rotten soci-

ety...but we always have hope, hope that the world will change and become more caring," said Mohammad Drissi, dressed in white, tears streaming as he held the hand of his 4 1/2 year old daughter.

"I came here for Loubna's brothers and sisters. The man who did that to Loubna should suffer the same fate. He should be shut up in a box," Inare, 10, told Reuters.

Nearly a small shrine to Loubna was covered with flowers, children's drawings and messages of sorrow and support.

After the ceremony the small white coffin, draped in a black and gold prayer shawl, containing Loubna's body was taken to Brussels airport for a flight to the family's home town of Tangier, Morocco.

Shock at the discovery of Loubna's body has turned to anger at the evident bungling by Brussels police in the first investigation into Loubna's disappearance.

Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene admitted Friday that mistakes had been made, and steps would be taken.

The discovery of Loubna's body brought to five the number of dead young girls found in Belgium since last August when another convicted paedophile, Marc Dutroux, was arrested.

Two young, sexually-abused girls were rescued from a dungeon in the basement of one of Dutroux' houses and the bodies of four girls were unearthed on two other properties either owned by or connected with him. Dutroux has been charged with murder.

There have been growing allegations of official protection for Dutroux, a theme that a special parliamentary commission has increasingly focused on since it began investigating the bungled police investigations five months ago.

On Thursday the commission, which had been due to report on March 15, was given an extra month to pursue its inquiries.

Kissinger backs India's bid for U.N. Security Council seat

NEW DELHI (R) — India has won support from former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for its drive to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.

Dr. Kissinger said India's growing economic and political power meant it deserved a seat on the U.N. Council.

"I do think that India has a claim to a seat," he told a business conference in the capital New Delhi. "India will become a major player and play a significant international role."

Former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating told the same gathering he no longer

opposed India's membership in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum.

"We can start to consider new members in APEC," Mr. Keating said, "and I can certainly see a role for India in that."

Dr. Kissinger, building on his familiar theme of the limitations of U.S. power, said the United States should not try to determine the outcome of a longstanding dispute between India and Pakistan over the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

"There are some issues where our (U.S.) contribution will be finite," he said. "It

(Kashmir) is an issue that has to be dealt with between India and Pakistan."

India and Pakistan have agreed later this month to resume bilateral peace talks which broke down in 1994 over Kashmir.

The neighbours have fought three wars since independence in 1947, two of them over Kashmir which is divided between the two nations.

Dr. Kissinger said Washington should not try to force India or Pakistan to roll back their nuclear weapons capabilities, but to ensure that such weapons do not proliferate.

China says criminals bombed bus; exiles claim link

BEIJING (R) — China blamed criminal elements Sunday for a bomb that ripped through a rush-hour bus on a busy Beijing street, and offered a big reward for help in solving the case.

Eviled Uighur separatists claimed responsibility for Friday's deadly blast, and vowed to stage more attacks until they had gained "complete freedom" for China's far western region of Xinjiang.

Local Beijing newspapers said in a brief but prominent announcement that "criminal elements had used a homemade explosive de-

vice" in the attack.

The bomb went off on a Number 22 bus as it trundled through Beijing's western Xidan district during the evening rush hour. China's state-controlled media have said no one died but sources said the blast killed at least two people and injured 30.

The semi-official China news service quoted Beijing Mayor Jia Qingling as saying another smaller bomb went off earlier last week elsewhere in the Chinese capital. No one was hurt in that incident.

The Beijing blasts followed a string of bus bomb-

ings in Urumqi, capital of the restive Muslim region of Xinjiang.

Exiled ethnic Uighurs, who want to set up an independent state of "East Turkestan" in Xinjiang, claimed responsibility for those attacks which killed nine people and injured 74.

"The bus explosion in Beijing city ... is the only way for the Xinjiang Uighur people to take revenge against Communist China's oppression," Taiwan's state-run Central News Agency said in a report quoting the Turkey-based Organisation for Turkestan Freedom.

China's national media have ignored the bombings in Beijing and Xinjiang.

On Sunday, however, local Beijing newspapers published a police notice calling on the public, and passengers on the Number 22 bus in particular, to come forward with any information that could aid the investigation.

"Those who provide important information will be given a substantial reward," the notice said.

Police were unwilling to go beyond the brief official statements. "We cannot offer any details of progress in the case," said one official.

India to discuss all issues with Pakistan — Gujral

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral has said talks with Pakistan this month would address all issues of mutual concern, adding that the freezing of trade between the two neighbours had been futile.

"The Indo-Pakistan dialogue, which will resume later this month, is expected to address all issues of mutual concern," Mr. Gujral said in a speech prepared for delivery to a business conference in New Delhi.

Pakistan announced Thursday that Foreign Ministry secretaries of the two governments would meet in New Delhi on March 28-31. Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda said he hoped to see a positive outcome.

Mr. Gujral said India was committed to a relationship of trust, friendship and co-operation with Pakistan.

"I think that there is a growing perception on both sides of the India-Pakistan border that the freezing of our bilateral trade and economic relationship over the past decades has achieved

nothing better than mere waste and futility," he said.

The last round of talks between the South Asian neighbours in January 1994 broke down over Kashmir, which controls two thirds of the Himalayan region, and Pakistan, with the rest.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars, two of them over Kashmir, since they gained independence from Britain in 1947.

New Delhi considers all of Kashmir as a part of India. Islamabad, which denies New Delhi's charges of training and arming separatist rebels, wants the Kashmiris to be allowed to vote in a U.N.-mandated plebiscite on whether to join Pakistan or India.

No agenda has been announced for the March meeting, which is to be followed in early April by a meeting of the two countries' foreign ministers.

Pakistan has insisted in the past that Kashmir was the "core issue" and must be on the agenda of any India-Pakistan dialogue. But India

has said progress over Kashmir should not be a pre-condition for discussing other issues.

Meanwhile, a Pakistani paramilitary Ranger was killed and a civilian woman badly wounded in a clash between Indian and Pakistani troops near the city of Sialkot, about 200 kilometres southeast of Islamabad, a military source said Saturday.

The source said Indian troops had opened fire across the so-called working border between Pakistan and the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir at 10.30 a.m. (0530 GMT) Friday.

One member of the Chenab Rangers was killed and a woman was seriously wounded. Several other civilians were wounded in the shooting, he added.

Pakistani soldiers retaliated, but the source said he could not say if they had inflicted any casualties on the Indian side.

"Pakistani Rangers are firing in self-defence. It is the Indians who are carrying out unprovoked firing. They

want to spread it," said the source, who asked not to be named.

He said clashes, involving automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades, were still going on in the Charwa, Jhammat, Pookhlian and Shakargah sectors of the border.

In the northern Indian city of Jammu, authorities said there had been exchanges of gunfire for several weeks but they could not confirm the reported killing Friday.

"Firing has been going on for the last several weeks along the international border near R.S. Pora village, Suchetgarh and Samba sectors," an official with the paramilitary Border Security Force told Reuters. "But we don't know what happened on the other side of the border."

The working border between Indian and Pakistan stretches 174 kilometres between the Chenab and Ravi Rivers to join up in the north with the line of control, or ceasefire line, dividing Kashmir.

U.K. teacher adds stone age caveman to family tree

LONDON (R) — British scientists were celebrating their feat in tracing a living descendant of a 9,000-year-old skeleton and establishing the world's oldest known family tree.

In an astonishing piece of detective work, they matched DNA material extracted from the tooth cavity of Britain's oldest complete skeleton with that of a 42-year-old history teacher.

The genetic material showed without doubt that teacher Adrian Targett is a direct descendant through his mother's line of the skeleton known as Cheddar Man — found in 1903 in caves in Cheddar Gorge in south-west England.

"It is extraordinary that the DNA survives at all but we were able to extract it and sequence it," said Bryan Sykes of Oxford University's Institute of Molecular Medicine.

"They would have shared a common ancestor about

10,000 years ago so they are related," Mr. Sykes added.

Mr. Targett lives less than a mile from the caves where Cheddar Man was found. Previous tests have shown that Cheddar Man suffered a violent death at the age of about 23 in 7150 B.C.

The Oxford University team spent months analysing samples from the skeleton before taking DNA swabs from about 20 local people whose families had lived in the Cheddar area for generations.

Mr. Targett, who teaches modern history, said he took part only to make up the numbers.

"I was astonished when the scientists said I was the descendant. Appropriately enough I am a history teacher but I have to admit I know next to nothing about Cheddar Man. I suppose I really should try to include him in my family tree," he told reporters.

Mr. Targett can now boast

a lineage centuries older than that of Britain's royal family which traces its heritage back to \$29 A.D.

The oldest previously recorded relative was the great-great great-great grandfather of Confucius, who lived in the 8th century B.C.

Scientists said the odds on finding a match were not as enormous as might appear because of the relatively small number of people who lived in Britain's stone age.

Mr. Sykes said the discovery strengthened the theory that the ancestors of modern-day Britons were hunter-gatherers rather than farmers.

"There has been an idea that most modern European are descended from farmers that came in from the Middle East about 10,000 years ago, reaching Britain about 6,000 years ago.

"This kind of evidence shows that is probably not true and that modern Bri-

tons are in fact descended from the earlier inhabitants like Cheddar Man who existed on hunting and gathering and who were not farmers," Mr. Sykes told BBC Radio.

Scientists said they were now hoping to use the same DNA sampling technique to prove whether Neanderthal man, which died out about 25,000 years ago, was linked to Homo-Sapiens humans or was a completely different species.

Professor Chris Stringer, a researcher at the Natural History Museum, said: "This work may finally let us end a 150-year-old argument which has existed since a Neanderthal man fossil was first found."

Mr. Targett, an only child who has no children himself, was still coming to terms with the idea of having a caveman as a relative.

But his wife Catherine said "maybe this explains why he likes his steaks rare."



Dr. Chris Stringer, principal researcher of human origins at the Natural History Museum, holds the skull of the 'Cheddar Man.' The 'Cheddar Man' who lived over 9,000 years ago in Cheddar Gorge has recently undergone a series of experiments to extract ancient DNA from his skull (Reuters photo)

U.S. debate on ratifying chemical arms pact heats up

WASHINGTON (R) — Both sides in the debate on an international treaty outlawing chemical weapons are bringing out their big guns in an effort to get it approved or defeated in the U.S. Senate by an April 29 deadline.

The Clinton administration is trying to pry the treaty from the grip of conservative Sen. Jesse Helms and win a two-thirds Senate vote before that date, when the treaty goes into force.

Mr. Clinton says failure to ratify would mean the United States would have no role in implementing the pact and American chemical companies could lose export trade to companies in countries that are parties to the treaties — an argument also being made by the Chemical Manufacturers Association.

The 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, signed by more than 160 countries, bars states from acquiring, stockpiling, transferring or using chemical weapons.

Prominent members of previous administrations are arguing about the treaty in newspaper articles as White House National Security Adviser Sandy Berger leads negotiations with a group of senators in an effort to pave the way to a Senate vote.

Opponents have been waging a vociferous campaign, asserting that compliance cannot be verified and the treaty will subject U.S. firms to unconstitutional searches by international inspectors or onerous red tape.

Supporters, including top administration officials, argue it will improve the ability of U.S. intelligence to monitor chemical threats to the United States and make it difficult for states like Libya to make poison gas.

In any case, they say, the United States is committed to destroying its own chemical arms under a 1985 law and the treaty forces other countries to do the same.

This week a wordy debate in the public print continued with three former defence secretaries, James Schlesinger, Caspar Weinberger and Donald Rumsfeld, opposing the treaty.

They were replying to an article favouring ratification by former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and former CIA Director John Deutch.

The administration seeks to answer all attacks in an effort to build public pressure for ratification, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency director John Holm said Friday. "We are finding a very receptive public response," he said.

The administration is taking heart from a recent Wirthlin Poll showing that 84 per cent of Democrats and Republicans questioned favoured ratification.

Behind the scenes, Mr. Weinberger and other officials are having talks with a group of nine Republican senators in an effort to defuse potentially fatal opposition in the Senate.

Mr. Helms, a North Carolina Republican who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and has often been a foe of arms agreements, has been waging a campaign against the chemical weapons convention and could bottle it up in committee.

But Mr. Holm said "I feel fairly good" about the headway being made in the talks with senators.

Sen. Helms, backed by Republican leader Trent Lott, has said that before the Senate deals with the treaty it should act on Republican agenda issues, such as restructuring the State Department and its agencies and legislation requiring United Nations reform and deployment of a national missile defence.



Vice-President Al Gore (right) talks with members of the media at waters edge in Lebanon Junction. Mr. Gore is on a four state trip to see flood damage for himself. Looking on at left is Kentucky Governor Paul Patton, and Lt. Gov. Steve Henry, behind (Reuters photo)

U.S. town virtually disappears under flood waters

WEST POINT, Kentucky (AFP) — The town of West Point, Kentucky has virtually disappeared under the muddy flood waters of the Ohio and Salt Rivers.

Thirty of the town's 1,200 residents waited out the floods on two patches of high, green ground surrounded by brown, river water that nearly reached the bottoms of basketball hoops.

"I was worried to death," said Michele Cotton, 39, who abandoned her trailer home Monday after a 30-centimeter rain swelled the already high rivers.

She is safe in the Stithon Baptist Church, 21 kilometers from where her home in the Bel Air Trailer Park is completely submerged. The clothing and toys that she grabbed before leaving are all that she and her nieces, Kameron, 3, and Christina, 16, have left.

One of the 30 people who

refused to leave was John White, whose home on main street was a block from the water's edge Saturday.

"I've lived here all my life and I'm not going to leave now," said Mr. White, 47, who survived the flood of 1964 and extolled the quiet, neighborly virtues of the town.

Tens of thousands of people have been displaced in Kentucky, and still more fled their homes in Ohio, Indiana and West Virginia. The flooding has been blamed for 26 deaths and portions of the four states have been declared disaster areas, which frees federal funding for flood victims.

Damage has thus far been estimated at \$350 million but is expected to go higher. Electrical and sewage treatment plants have been knocked out, while water has collapsed gas lines and dangerously satu-

rated the foundations of buildings.

In other places along the Ohio River, communities downstream are bracing for the worst.

"Since the river is still cresting, we don't know exactly what the damage is," said Val Bunting, spokeswoman for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Vice-President Al Gore toured Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia and his home state of Tennessee Saturday to visit communities that were nearly washed away.

Scores of people were reported missing, but officials were optimistic that most were staying with friends or are unable to call because phones were out of service. "It's hard to tally at this point because so many communities are still waiting to get in there," Mr. Bunting said.

"We're playing a wait and

see game as much as the victims are," she said, adding that the river was not expected to settle into its bed in some parts of Indiana for "a few days."

In Falmouth, Kentucky, cleanup and assessment began after the town's 2,700 residents were allowed back to their homes.

But when Doug Mastin arrived to help clean up his sister's house, he found it had been carried 30 meters into her neighbor's yard.

Steve Butts said he might have to raze his mother's 21-year-old house, which sat under nearly 13 centimeters of mud.

"There's nothing left," he said. "We'll have to bulldoze and build it again."

To help flood victims, FEMA provides funds for temporary housing, emergency repairs, mortgage and rental assistance, and crisis counseling. Mr. Bunting said.

Italy: No need to fear united states of Europe

VENICE, Italy (R) — Ardent europhile Italy has told its more reluctant partner, Britain, that it had no need for "grotesque" fears that the EU's treaty revision would result in the creation of a united states of Europe.

"The European dilemma appears to be depicted, especially in the British press, in terms of a desire to cancel the national state, to create a superstate, a modern Leviathan," Mr. Dini told an Anglo-Italian seminar on Europe in Venice.

"This Picture — which frankly sometimes falls into the grotesque — is far from being a true one...Not even the revision of the Maastricht Treaty will give rise to the united states of Europe," he said.

"The relationship between

national sovereignty and Europe is not a zero-sum game."

The European Union is scheduled to finish updating its treaties and workings this year as the 15-nation bloc prepares for the launch of Economic and Monetary Union in 1999.

Some countries want to move faster towards integration than others but Britain insists that all countries must approve any plans for a vanguard of members to forge ahead faster.

Mr. Dini gave Britain's position short shrift: "It is our view that no-one should be granted the power to hold the timetables and objectives of integration hostage, all the more so as we face the prospect of a vaster and more heterogeneous

Europe."

Britain is also opposed to an extension of decision-making by majority voting which could limit use of the national veto.

Mr. Dini said that despite Britain's fears of a "tyranny of the majority," enlargement of the EU meant change was inevitable. Italy, one of the founder members of the European Union, is determined not to be relegated to second-class European status and has pushed through a punishing 1997 budget and plans a further package of financial measures to try to qualify for EMU.

Mr. Dini was keen to stress Italy's other efforts to be in the European vanguard amid fears, in Germany and elsewhere, that

Italy could undermine the stability of the planned single currency and should not be allowed to join at the start.

"Europe cannot be restricted to the monetary domain," he said, adding that political reliability was vital and that Italy was proving its commitment by being the first EU state to revise its constitution substantially since the Maastricht Treaty.

A bicameral parliamentary commission is studying changes to the second part of Italy's 1948 constitution to try to strengthen its institutions and make governments more durable.

Mr. Dini said the new constitution "will be the first to bear the stamp of the new Europe."

Tajik government, opposition sign military accord

MOSCOW (R) — Tajikistan's government and Islamic Opposition signed a military agreement Saturday, marking a major step towards a peace settlement in the Central Asian state, Russian news agencies said.

The accord, signed in Moscow in the presence of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov and U.N. special envoy on Tajikistan, Gerd Meyer, sets out a four-step plan to integrate the armed opposition into the army.

The process should be completed by July 1998, Interfax News Agency said,

and its implementation would start after the next round of talks, now on a political protocol, which is due to take place in Tehran on April 9.

Mr. Primakov praised Saturday's agreement as a step towards "a full, sweeping and unconditional settlement of the Tajik problem," Interfax said.

Mr. Meyer said political talks should concentrate on the legalisation of three opposition parties, banned by the government in 1993.

The Moscow talks, which started last month, continue a U.N.-sponsored peace

accord signed last December after four years of civil war in the former Soviet republic in which thousands of people have been killed.

The negotiations are also mediated by Russia, which keeps a large military presence in the remote mountainous republic of 5.7 million people.

The talks have been interrupted for several days after one opposition member was killed and other five seized in the Tajik capital Dushanbe.

A ceasefire has largely held in Tajikistan since the December accord, but West-

ern observers say the two sides' inability to control rogue bands roaming the mountains may jeopardise peace efforts.

Diplomats say a power-sharing deal, in which seats on a new commission for national reconciliation were shared out between the government and opposition, could be explosive because it leaves no places for any other faction.

An opposition leader told Interfax Saturday the two sides have agreed to try and find common language with "third forces" and try to bring them to the negotiating table.

Half of Swiss back holocaust foundation — poll

ZURICH, (R) — Half of Swiss voters support a controversial government plan to launch a huge humanitarian foundation to aid the poor and persecuted, including survivors of the holocaust, according to first sign of broad popular support after two days of criticism led by far-right politicians suggested that the idea could be shot down in a referendum.

"This is a pleasant surprise. This result demonstrates a very widespread willingness among the Swiss people to support sol-

idarity," government spokesman Achille Casanova told the newspaper about the poll.

President Arnold Koller proposed the "Swiss foundation for solidarity" this week in a bid to restore Switzerland's tarnished reputation after months of battering on the world stage by critics who said the country abused its neutrality to profit from World War II.

The survey, which the newspaper said had a margin of error of four per cent, was in sharp contrast to a telephone survey by the

tabloid newspaper Blick that appeared Friday.

Under the banner headline "No," the tabloid said 90 per cent of nearly 4,000 callers had denounced the plan as a waste of Swiss Central Bank gold reserves.

But the Blick survey was a telephone call-in poll, which pollsters say are not as accurate as random sampling surveys like the one for the Berne newspaper.

Opposition from the far-right is led by industrialist and parliament member Christoph Blocher, who said the cabinet had "lost its

head" after Mr. Koller surprised a joint session of parliament with the plan.

The foundation proposal was endorsed by the Swiss Bankers Association, but one financier with ties to the Central Bank joined the public opposition Friday.

Kurt Schildknecht, a member of the 40-member Supervisory Council of the Swiss National Bank (SNB), said using gold reserves for a political project would compromise the Central Bank's treasured independence.

New violence erupts in Albania

Vranitzky begins conciliation mission

TIRANA (R) — Fresh violence erupted in southern Albania Saturday while in the capital Tirana a conciliation mission led by former Austrian leader Franz Vranitzky urged the country's president to extend a ceasefire.

In the town of Gjirokaster, 30 kilometres from the Greek border, hundreds of people ransacked a big army base and put newly deployed government troops to flight, eyewitnesses said.

Dozens of troops, who had just arrived by helicopter to bolster morale in the main government stronghold in the south, ran off into the surrounding forests after being confronted by rebels and angry residents.

Gjirokaster is one of the few southern towns which has not joined the revolt against President Sali Berisha, initially sparked by the collapse of Pyramid investment schemes. More than 20 people have died in the past week.

In the port of Vlore, a flashpoint in the volatile south, Italy evacuated 33 Italians and Albanians by

helicopter across the Adriatic Sea. Residents of a nearby village said one man was shot by unidentified gunmen.

Mr. Vranitzky, heading the mission of the Vienna-based Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), said he had asked President Sali Berisha to extend a 48-hour truce, due to expire at 6 a.m. (0500 GMT) Sunday.

Mr. Vranitzky told a news conference after "very extensive" talks with Mr. Berisha and opposition leaders that he expected a decision on his request at a further meeting with the Albanian leader Saturday.

"We would be very glad if the ceasefire would be prolonged for a further 48 hours to give more opportunity for people to surrender weapons and to intensify negotiations between the various political forces," Mr. Vranitzky said.

Greece's Deputy Foreign Minister Yannis Kranidiotis, also helping in mediation, later said Mr. Berisha "appeared to have a negative attitude initially (about

the extension), but I have the feeling he was thinking seriously about it."

Mr. Berisha, backed by opposition parties, proclaimed the ceasefire beginning Friday after troops moved southward under a state of emergency proclaimed by parliament, dominated by the president's Democratic Party.

Rebels have rejected the government offer and demand Mr. Berisha's resignation, fresh elections and compensation for savers who lost money in the shady investment plans.

Mr. Vranitzky said Mr. Berisha had reissued a proposal for fresh elections to be held within 45 days. But he said there was limited enthusiasm for such a timeframe from opposition parties, which say polls are impossible under emergency rule.

Mr. Vranitzky said no progress could be made on measures to provide international financial aid to Albania and extend cooperation with European institutions such as the European Union until the violence

was ended for good.

The OSCE mission also met members of the ruling Democratic Party and an 11-party opposition grouping committed to forming a broader based government.

Mr. Vranitzky's mission was the latest of several Western attempts to mediate an end to the rebellion. Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Mierlo, representing the European Union presidency, urged Mr. Berisha Friday to refrain from violence.

In Venice, Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini said unrest in Albania had shown the European Union's lack of preparation for crises on its doorstep and said it should be able to move quickly and even use force in such cases.

"The Albanian crisis is a classic European crisis of the post-cold war era — too far from the United States for the U.S. to take an immediate interest, too close to Europe for us to ignore it," Mr. Dini said in a speech.

S. Korean parties agree on new labour law

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's ruling and opposition parties agreed Saturday on a new labour law to replace a bill that sparked weeks of strikes after it was rammed through parliament last December, a parliamentary official said.

"We agreed on a new labour bill today. We will announce the details Monday," said Lee Keung-Kyu, chairman of the National Assembly's Environment and Labour Committee.

The compromise measure would be submitted to the assembly for a vote Tuesday, he added.

The new law delays for two years the implementation of a clause in the original bill making it easier for companies to lay off workers, a provision that led to worker fury. But it upholds the principle of "no work no pay" for striking workers, a key employers' demand.

In a concession to labour unions, it allows multiple trade union organisations at a national level, breaking the monopoly of the Korean Federation of Trade Unions (KFTU). But in the workplace the law still insists on a single union representation.

The new bill also requires the abolition of salary payments for full-time union officials in five years.

President Kim Young-Sam had been forced to send the original bill back to parliament after its forced passage with no debate unleashed some of the worst industrial unrest in South Korean history. Ruling party MPs pushed it through in an unannounced early-morning session while opposition members slept.

The KFTU said the new bill was an improvement on the earlier text but still fell short of its expectations. Officials at the outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) available for immediate comment.

It was the KCTU that organised the new year work stoppages which cost the nation \$3.28 billion in lost production and \$509 million in lost exports.

Hours before the new bill was agreed, about 800 members of the confederation rallied in Seoul, demanding the entire labour law be scrapped.

The Federation of Korean Industries, a lobbying group for the nation's business conglomerates or Chaebol, said that although it did not find the new text entirely satisfactory it would accommodate itself to the bill.

Thousands of Chinese brave freezing weather to watch historic eclipse

BEIJING (AFP) — Thousands braved bone-chilling temperatures in a remote tip of China Sunday to view the rare coincidence of a solar eclipse and a comet which passes by the earth every 3,000 years.

But a snow storm in neighbouring Mongolia stopped the show for hordes of gazers who had travelled from as far as Britain to witness the event.

Chinese astrologers and journalists who witnessed the darkening of the sky in remote Mohe county, some 2,500 kilometres north of Beijing, said the event was stunning despite the bitter cold with temperatures registering minus 38 degrees Celsius (minus 37 degrees Fahrenheit).

"The sun gradually got eaten away by the moon and then there was a crown of light around the outline," said Wei Guan, 38, a Beijing journalist who had travelled for three days to witness the event.

"The sky finally went black and then we saw the comet passing. It was totally awe-inspiring," he said in a telephone interview.

The Hale-Bopp Comet, which only comes to Earth every 3,000 years, streaked across the sky during the eclipse over the northern tip of China.

The eclipse itself started at 0044 GMT over the northwestern region of Xinjiang and Russia's Byisk region.

It swept over Mongolia and achieved totality over the northern city of Dar-

hkan at 0048 GMT before passing over Mohe at 0107 GMT and then gradually waning over eastern Russia and the Siberian Sea.

According to local officials and residents in Mohe, which is known as the North Pole of China, more than 5,000 people travelled to watch the rare astronomical phenomena.

Astronomers praised the ideal weather that would allow further research into the effects of an eclipse on the earth's magnetic field and ionised stratum.

"We got more information from this total eclipse in Mohe because the two minutes and forty second period was longer than previous ones and the sky was much clearer," Shen Haizhaing, an astronomer from Beijing observatory told Xinhua.

But astronomers who flocked to the northern Mongolian city of Darhkan to witness the total eclipse of the sun were stymied by a snow storm that created a white out over the black out.

The sky darkened, as predicted, for just over two minutes. But the 1,000 people who had travelled from as far as Britain, Switzerland and the United States missed the whole process of the moon "biting" into the sun as it was obscured by a heavy snow storm.

Only the lucky few who had booked a \$2,500 flight above the clouds in a Boeing 727 got a clear impression of the first Mongolian eclipse in 90 years.

But not everyone was

downhearted — Mongolia's Buddhist monks have been dreading the moment for years as they believe it is a portent of doom, destruction and chaos.

"The solar eclipse is not a holiday or a celebration for Mongolia's Buddhists," Lama Sonambay of the Gandan Buddhist University told the Ulan Bator Post before the event.

"We will chant special sutras during the eclipse ... to protect people's lives and try to instill peace in their minds during this calamity," he added.

However, in the rest of the region, even partial eclipses attracted crowds.

At Beijing's ancient observatory, which still houses astronomical instruments crafted by Jesuit Priests, crowds started arriving before dawn to witness the 85 per cent eclipse.

Special viewing glasses were on sale for 1.8 yuan (20 cents), but many of the enthusiasts fashioned their own eye protectors — ranging from photographic film clipped on top of sunglasses to a recent X-ray.

In Tokyo, computer experts and fans of astronomical dramas established an Internet network among 23 locations in Japan and Siberia for a live eclipse show.

The coincidence of an eclipse and a comet has only been recorded on three previous occasions — in May 1882 in Egypt, in May 1947 in Brazil and November 1948 in Kenya.

Russia puts aside Chubais row to mark Women's Day

MOSCOW (R) — Russia celebrated women's day Saturday, putting aside briefly a political storm unleashed by President Boris Yeltsin with the appointment of liberal ally Anatoly Chubais to a key government post.

The appointment of Mr. Chubais as first deputy prime minister Friday is likely to give momentum to free-market reforms in Russia, enthuse the West and enrage the opposition and the Communist-dominated state duma lower house of parliament.

"It is once more spitting in the face of society, at least its opposition part which numbers some 30 million people," leading Communist Valentin Kupstov told Interfax News Agency.

Mr. Yeltsin marked the annual holiday of Women's Day with a radio address, telling Russian women he admired them all but also using the opportunity to snipe at parliament and at his own government.

"When you try to resolve the problems of a family budget, you have to put more into it than our deputies or members of government, because, unlike them, you have to make a budget which can be met," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin said last week he had major doubts the spending plan could be fulfilled but he had signed it to avoid political turmoil. The government's plan was bad and the duma had made it even worse, he said then.

Mr. Yeltsin's jovial tone Saturday corresponded to the festive atmosphere in Russia but contrasted sharply with the seriousness of the political move he made Friday by shifting Mr. Chubais to the government.

His decree did not mention three other men holding the same rank in the cabinet. But Kremlin sources have said Mr. Chubais was likely to become the sole first deputy prime minister while the others would be demoted or sacked.

The appointment of Mr.

Chubais, mastermind of Russia's controversial privatisation programme, followed a strong and decisive state of the nation speech to parliament by Mr. Yeltsin which marked his return to the helm of power after eight months of illness.

"Enough is enough...The time has come to restore order and I will do that," he said. "The structure and composition of the government must be changed. Energetic and competent people will come...And I will announce these changes in the coming days."

The West is sure to hail the new role for Mr. Chubais. He is trusted by the likes of the International Monetary Fund and the group of seven industrial nations and is capable of reviving confidence that reforms in Russia are not stalled.

Shortly after the Chubais announcement, U.S. President Bill Clinton also gave an optimistic prognosis for the Russian economy.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية المستقلة

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MARMOUD AL KAYED

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Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Solution in equal rights

NOT LONG before the Jabal Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) settlement became material for debate and resolution by the U.N. Security Council and a crisis that threatened to get out of hand, a report leaked in Israel concerning Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's willingness to accept conditional withdrawal from the Golan Heights. According to the report, Netanyahu was said to have informed President Bill Clinton during their recent talks in Washington of this Israeli "concession," which apparently aimed at prodding Damascus to rejoin the peace process.

The trouble with this Israeli posture or with the early one, that purports to accept the resumption of negotiations with Syria on the basis of the 1991 Madrid peace conference formula that incorporated SCRs 242 and 338, is Israel's own interpretation of these two principal resolutions. Israel has long held on to its own construction of Resolution 242 as calling for withdrawal from Arab territories occupied in 1967 but not all. Therefore, and unless until we know more about the Netanyahu government's ultimate intentions, any ceremonial endorsement of 242 and 338 would not be sufficient to advance the stalled negotiations on the Syrian track.

On the Palestinian front, peace-making efforts have been advanced by neither the decision to build at Jabal Abu Ghneim nor by the U.S. veto of a U.N. resolution calling for halting the settlement building nor by the extremely limited scope of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, which was called for in the Hebron agreement. That agreement had given us all hope that the peace process would be moving in the right direction and achieving positive results quickly. Now, however, it seems Israel is once again dragging its feet and not showing enough seriousness and determination to push forward. Netanyahu appears determined to link the fate of the second stage withdrawals not only with the Palestinian acceptance of continued Jewish colonisation of Arab East Jerusalem but also with assurances that Palestinian National Authority (PNA) President Yasser Arafat will not make a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state.

As the PNA's reaction to the construction of thousands of new housing units in East Jerusalem has generally been muted, apparently in accordance with advice from the White House, the Israeli concern had considerably shifted to Arafat's statements on the possibility of declaring the establishment of a state.

The official Likud policy has been and still is to reject such a state. There will come a time, though, when Israel cannot veto the Palestinian right to self-determination and sovereignty on their soil. As long as the Palestinians are denied this inalienable right, which all peoples are entitled to, there can be no durable peace in the region. If Israel needs more time to get accustomed to the inevitable, so be it. But there is no way the Arabs will accept, in return for peace with Israel, less than what they are fully entitled to.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Dustour expressed the view that the unemployment problem in Jordan will not be solved by sending away the guest workers who are currently doing work shunned by Jordanians. Mohammad Sqour said that there must be change in the pattern of behaviour and thinking of the Jordanian youth who seek a secure job in government offices rather than take up an occupation in the private sector which yields higher returns than the government office work. The writer said that according to statistics, 70 per cent of the unemployed are between 16 and 30 years of age and mainly graduates of community colleges who seek a secure job with the government, no matter how low the wages. In the writer's view, unemployment can be contained if this group's behaviour changes and if they accept to do the work now performed by non-Jordanians. But, he said, the government can help in this matter by continuing to reduce the number of guest workers who in 1996 reached 400,000, offer vocational training to Jordanians willing to take up available jobs and attract bigger investment in income-generating projects that can employ great number of people. The writer also called on the government to reform the educational system in a manner that would enable university graduates and community colleges to be eligible for the jobs available on the labour market.

THE ISRAELI redeployment in areas outside the main Palestinian towns marks the beginning of the creation of the Palestinian state, a fact which is realised by the Arabs and the Israelis alike, said Sultan Hattab, a writer for Al Ra'i. The majority of the Israelis are behind the peace process and support the redeployment, and a large sector of the Israeli public does not object to the creation of a Palestinian state despite Benjamin Netanyahu's open opposition, said the writer. But the redeployment of Israeli forces in Palestine and the start of the final status negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians effectively means the separation of Israel from Palestine, which leads to the emergence of a Palestinian entity that sooner or later will turn into an independent state, argued the writer. The Palestinians have the right to an independent state and they are not waiting for the Israelis to do it out to them, according to the writer who said that the long struggle of the oppressed people is bound to be crowned with success and lead to the creation of the Palestinian state.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

For the sake of shopping

ONE STOP shops and shopping malls seem to be taking over the Jordanian market. Existing chains are expanding; a new Safeway is being built near the Seventh Circle on the other side of the street from C-Town (which would make excellent business sense). New chains are entering the market and the big stores are doing very well. Anyone who ventures into these stores will attest to how crowded they are at all times. But there is a social cost associated with this success — the big stores are usurping customers from the regular specialty stores which are suffering from lack of business. The damage to the small retailer is significant enough to prod the Greater Amman Municipality into deciding whether it will move to save downtown and the pedestrian dependent stores, or sit by and watch as downtown and the traditional souks become reminiscent of the deserted railway towns of the old West.

One-stop shops like Safeway, C-Town and Al Farid, among others, offer many products and advantages that the regular stores cannot offer. Superstores offer time-saving shopping to consumers, which is one reason they tend to attract middle class shoppers whose time is scarce and valuable. Because of the availability of space and their relatively huge purchasing options, these stores can offer variety at discounts which regular stores cannot afford to match. Indeed some of these superstores sell their own brands, under their own logos.

The big stores are run by better managers, their staff is somewhat more professional and their standards are higher than that of the regular stores. (One thing they do lack, and so does production in the whole country, is product liability legislation which would make producers and retailers more customer-oriented and standards conscious). Moreover, they offer convenient parking, something which the downtown Amman stores cannot offer. Thus, superstores make the process of shopping easy and less time consuming than it would have been otherwise.

So, is this why the street stores are failing? No. Have you tried walking down "Gardens" Street? One of the most disturbing experiences in anyone's life must be window shopping along that street. Why? Because there is no sidewalk. This street could have become the lifeline of Western Amman had somebody bothered to make a continuous sidewalk the length of the street to encourage parents to walk with their baby strollers and induce pedestrians to stroll in the evening and window-shop or maybe do some shopping, or at least get an idea about products they might want to buy in the future. Instead, the pavement is not even level. In numerous places along the street, one has to jump a few feet down to reach the pavement in front of the next store and mothers who dare

take their infants with them in strollers suffer terribly as they invariably have to carry their babies and their strollers simultaneously, while competing with motorists searching for a parking space.

Handicapped people compete with cars, thus chancing certain death, since the sidewalk is useless for their wheelchairs or walking sticks. Who is to blame? It does not matter; the shop owners could have gotten together and made their sidewalk level and continuous but they did not. And the municipality could have fixed the sidewalk for them, but it did not. What matters is that the street is half empty and that it has become the playground of fast cars. The only businesses that are doing well are the computer companies who are not dependent on pedestrian traffic and whose clientele usually communicates via modems.

The story of big business and shopping malls in Jordan is reminiscent of the story of the Walmart chain. The late Sam Walton, a billionaire who at one time was the richest man in the world, used to travel around the country in his Ford pickup truck searching for new locations in which to open his superstores (Walmarts). Sam usually chose small towns where there was no significant competition. In the process, he bankrupted the "mom and pop" stores in his chosen towns while his empire became the biggest department store chain in the world.

It may be true that the superstores are not more profitable than regular stores, or that they do not offer more variety than the latter. However, superstores offer parking spaces and clean spaces to walk in. Regular streets do not offer that, which may be the very reason why shoppers prefer this type of shopping to street stores.

Without sidewalks and without clean streets that do not look like they are located on the periphery of a quarry (a direct result of the building and non-stop sidewalk dumping activity) the streets of Jordan, particularly Amman, will lose to shopping malls and superstores. Most of the streets will be converted into pedestrians' deserted streets or in-town highways. Such damage is socially expensive as it affects the different strata of the economy. Not only will some groups be harder hit than others, the effect of the damage may be long lasting, if not irreparable, as well. For instance, store owners who fall into bankruptcy and lose their financial base will not be able to reopen their stores even if a sidewalk is built or if more parking spaces are made available after their bankruptcy; the damage cannot be easily rectified.

Should we stand idle by as the heart of Amman becomes scattered in the shopping malls and superstores of the suburbs? Maybe now is the time for city planners and officials to move, so let us not wait for too long.

How much more of a learning process is necessary for Israel to learn the price of its misconceptions?

By Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

The author is a senior research associate at the Moshe Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University. The following article is reprinted from the English language newspaper The Jerusalem Post.

ISRAEL'S FAMILIARITY with the Arab World is unique among "Western" countries, yet our policy makers have repeatedly failed to translate it into effective policy. The result is that Israel has paid dearly over the last quarter-century for a number of basic misconceptions.

In 1973, it thought the Arab states would never attack because of their strategic inferiority; in 1982, it thought it could alter the regional order at Palestinian and Syrian expense; and in 1987 it believed that the 20-year status quo in the West Bank and Gaza could be maintained indefinitely, at minimal cost.

In less than six months, the Netanyahu government has made an honourable contribution to this catalogue of faulty and dangerous thinking.

Misconception No. 1: The Palestinians issue carries little weight in Arab states' policy calculations.

To be sure, once Arafat had signed agreements with Israel, there was no reason

for most Arab states, to be "more Catholic than the Pope."

However, Netanyahu and his advisers failed to understand that Arab steps towards normalisation were conditioned on further Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement, for both Arab domestic and international reasons.

The freeze in normalisation, Mubarak's loss of trust in Netanyahu, and the escalation of tensions with Syria are all warning signs of a perilous slide back toward conflict.

Nowhere was the government's failed conception more apparent than with Jordan. Netanyahu mistakenly thought that the peace treaty and Jordan's ongoing fear of Palestinian nationalism would result in an anti-PLO alliance, including on the issue of Jerusalem.

Instead, the government's loose talk of expanding settlements and altering the Oslo framework and, especially, the opening of the Hashemite tunnel, drove Jordan back into Palestinian and Arab arms.

Misconception No. 2: Israel is merely a bystander in the current struggle between moderate, pragmatic forces in the Arab World and extremist, mostly Islamic fundamentalist ones — which, according to Prime Minister Netanyahu in a recent Ha'aretz interview, are already the stronger.

In fact, any Islamic fundamentalist version of the

old American "domino theory" has already been proven false; no Arab regime is in danger of being swept away by an "Islamic tide."

Certainly the outcome of Arab domestic struggles will ultimately be determined from within the Arab World, and only over an extended time period; however, progress towards a durable Arab-Israeli settlement is a necessary condition for Arab governments, serving as a springboard for closer political and economic ties with the West.

These, in turn, will buy them time to address their acute domestic problems. Thus, contrary to government thinking, Israel's policies, and the course of Arab-Israeli relations will contribute to the outcome of the modernist — fundamentalist struggle in the Arab World. This makes it in Israel's overriding interest to see the peace process through to its conclusion.

Misconception No. 3: The Middle East's inherent instability and likely eventual nuclearisation necessitates Israel's refraining from additional territorial concessions.

However, the West Bank and Golan Heights provide no protection whatsoever from Syrian, Iraqi or Iranian missiles. Achieving formal contractual peace with adequate security arrangements and incrementally deepening Arab-Israeli economic and soci-

etal links will help insulate Israel from whatever negative regional developments might arise.

Ending the state of war with its Arab neighbours will significantly reduce the temptation of Iran or Iraq to exploit the Arab-Israeli arena for their own ends.

Misconception No. 4: Israel's Arab citizens' "inevitable" irredentist and Islamist aspirations can only be contained by blocking the creation of a Palestinian state.

But the failure to achieve a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace — and the resulting strengthening of radical and Islamist tendencies throughout the region and in the immediate Israeli-Palestinian environs — poses a far greater threat to Jewish-Arab amity within Israel.

In any case, the views of Israel's Arab citizens towards the state will be determined by two factors: the degree to which their legitimate demands for equality are met by the authorities; and the course of Israeli-Palestinian relations.

One suspects that the imminent Hebron agreement indicates that the Netanyahu government has begun to learn the price of some of its misconceptions. One wonders how much more of a learning process is necessary, and what the costs along the way will be.

Human Rights File

Israel's High Court decision on Har Homa — racial, religious discrimination

By Waleed M. Sadi

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is desperately trying to sugar-coat his decision to go ahead with the plan to construct some 6,500 housing units for Jews on Jabal Abu Ghneim, a land admittedly situated in East Jerusalem and confiscated from Palestinian Arabs.

Netanyahu's latest gimmick was to promise that his government will also build for the Arab population of Jerusalem housing units in their respective sectors.

The Israeli prime minister also hinted that the Palestinian side can expect a greater Israeli withdrawal during the projected second stage of redeployment, agreed upon already and slated to begin early next month, if they only keep cool and stoically consent to the settlement project on Arab lands.

At a time when the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is grooming itself for no less than 30 per cent additional withdrawals from their territories, Israel is now offering a mere 10 per cent and considers this a bait to lure the Palestinians to yield to its dictates on the settlement front.

And with Israel still adamantly refusing the international community's unanimous condemnation of its latest "confidence-destruction" move, there is but one peaceful course left to salvage the situation and offer even Mr. Netanyahu a face-saving formula.

When the lands of Jabal Abu Ghneim were first confiscated by Israel more than three years ago, the expropriation was challenged in Israel's Supreme Court by a suit asserting that the act was illegal because it was discriminatory, i.e., the projected construction plan was earmarked for Jews alone. The Supreme Court at the time ruled against the application for rescinding the expropriation because the suing party did not show that there was in fact a definite plan to construct houses only for Jews. Now that it is known that the construction of 6,500 units will be for Jews alone, the Supreme Court had ample opportunity to declare the confiscation of the lands of the Jabal Abu Ghneim, as well as the planned construction on it, illegal and therefore null and void; nevertheless it decided otherwise for political rather than judicial reasons.

This unfortunate judicial course was adopted in the wake of the intervention by some Israelis from the Peace Now movement who have petitioned the highest court of Israel to pronounce itself once again against the recent decision to construct on the area in question by making a ruling that both the confiscation as well as the construction are discriminatory in nature.

Perhaps the Israeli High Court rested its recent ruling on the archaic and defunct legal argument of "equal but separate" formula, that was once depended on to perpetuate discriminate against Afro-Americans in the U.S., to render a finding in support of the Israeli government.

The claim by the Israeli government that there are plans to construct for the Arabs an equal amount of housing units in other areas of East Jerusalem must have weighed heavily on the minds of the judges of the High Court in Jerusalem when they decided to reject the petition for declaring the construction of housing units for Jews in East Jerusalem illegal.

Even though the confiscated lands on Jabal Abu Ghneim belong to Arabs and Jews alike, the mere fact that the expropriation was made for Jews alone makes the decision discriminatory. Had the decision been made to build for both Jews and Arabs, the legal situation would have been different.

The Israeli High Court of Justice should have examined the U.S. legal precedents on this very point before rendering a final judgement.

There is no country that has gathered a bigger wealth of jurisprudence on racial and religious discrimination than the U.S. For the Israeli High Court judges to opt out of their responsibilities in an area of the law that is so important, as racial and religious discrimination, will surely put the state of Israel on a collision course with the Human Rights Committee which monitors the application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This is not to mention that by deciding in support of racial and religious discrimination, the highest court of Israel has done a great deal of disservice to its reputation and credibility internationally, regionally and nationally.

I fully admire Mr. Ennenbach's courage and sincerity in addressing such a delicate problem — he must be immune to the sharp weapon of anti-semitism to tackle such an explosive issue.

Teaching compassion

To the Editor:

IT IS a sad reflection on our society that it has taken the case of Nuha and His Majesty King Hussein's intervention to bring to the notice of the people of Jordan the plight of such children and the institutions that care for them.

All countries have similar problems with public and private institutions that care for those who no one else will care for, but it seems that Jordan has a cultural problem in its acceptance of orphans, the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill, these being three groups which I have had first hand experience of dealing with.

I do not think it is fair to lay the blame at the ministry's door as it is my belief that the present minister has made great strides in trying to provide a fairer and honest distribution of the funds available to the underprivileged.

No amount of money can compensate for the love and affection and hugs galore which children in normal, happy families receive on a daily basis. Many rich

Courage to write

To the Editor:

I HAVE read with great interest Mr. Ennenbach's article "Why they won't let us forget" (Jordan Times, March 3, 1997) and I found its title to pose, indeed, a very good question.

The slogan of "never forget" can only generate hatred among individuals and nations alike. Hatred begets violence and violence begets crime. Normally the first victim of such a policy is the one who never wants to forget.

I fully admire Mr. Ennenbach's courage and sincerity in addressing such a delicate problem — he must be immune to the sharp weapon of anti-semitism to tackle such an explosive issue.

Sue Abu Nowar,
Amman.

F. Farradj,
Amman 11118.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Italy discusses immigration, Israel with Tunisia

ROME (R) — Italy has told Tunisia that it wants a bilateral accord on the repatriation of Tunisian illegal immigrants to be concluded as soon as possible, the foreign ministry said on Saturday. It said in a statement Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini made the call at a "long and cordial" meeting with his Tunisian counterpart, Abderrahim Zouari, late on Friday. Such an accord was "fundamental for an effective reinforcement of border controls," it said. Italy, with long coastlines and relatively lax enforcement of deportation orders for illegal immigrants, is a magnet for clandestine entry from North Africa. Many immigrants use the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa as a back-door into Europe. The statement said the two ministers also discussed the Middle East peace process. "Great concern was expressed over the Israeli decision to move ahead with the construction of the Har Homa settlement," it said. "The demand was expressed for both sides to avoid gestures which could compromise anew the climate of trust laboriously rebuilt after the Hebron deal," the statement said.

Philippines president starts two-day visit to Qatar

DOHA (AP) — Philippines President Fidel Ramos arrived in Qatar on Sunday for a two-day visit aimed at expanding political and economic ties. Mr. Ramos was met at the airport by the emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, the official Qatar News Agency reported. Mr. Ramos is accompanied by a high-level delegation that includes the ministers of foreign affairs, energy, trade and industry, as well as senators and congressmen. On Monday, Mr. Ramos and accompanying Filipino businessmen and industrialists will meet with Qatari businessmen to discuss trade opportunities. Mr. Ramos is the first Philippines head of government to visit Qatar. He arrived from Pakistan and is expected to leave to Bahrain on Monday. During his visits to Qatar and Bahrain, Mr. Ramos is to meet with members of the Filipino community. Some 33,000 Filipinos live in Qatar, and an additional 25,000 live in Bahrain.

Murdoch company director questioned in Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police have extended a tax fraud probe against executives at an Israeli subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's media empire to include allegations of illegal wire-tapping, officials said on Sunday. But the officials denied a report published in the British weekly Sunday Business that the subsidiary's chief executive, Abraham Peled, had been arrested a week ago on his return from a trip abroad. "Peled was not arrested, he is simply the target of an ongoing investigation and was questioned by tax agents," said Uzi Sandori, a police spokesman. "He must also answer questions concerning allegations of illegal wire-tapping," the official said. Mr. Peled, president of News Datacom Research (NDR), and other NDR executives have been under investigation since October for a series of alleged violations, including hiding \$160 million in earnings from Israeli tax authorities. Press reports said that in the course of their investigation, police found evidence of illegal wire-tapping in the form of tape recordings of telephone conversations involving lawyers, journalists and tax inspectors. The Murdoch group has denied any financial wrongdoing and in October denounced the raids on NDR offices, saying it had agreed to cooperate with tax police. According to Sunday Business, it also denies the wire-tapping. News Datacom, founded in 1988, manufactures high-technology products such as sophisticated electronics equipment and television decoders and is one of the largest firms in the Murdoch empire.

Secular Jews angered by new Sabbath closures

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Restaurants and movie theaters will close for the Sabbath in a new suburban Tel Aviv shopping centre now that an ultra orthodox Jew has become the major shareholder in the company that owns the complex. The vast majority of those who frequent the centre consider themselves secular and shop during the Jewish Sabbath which lasts from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Four assistant managers of the Africa-Israel Property Company have resigned over the new policy instituted by the major shareholder, diamond dealer Lev Leviev. While the Sabbath is the main holiday in Israel, a number of shops, restaurants and movie theatres remain open with the municipality's blessing in the Tel Aviv area. "A Free People," a group that opposes the imposition of religious measures, is suing the company, and Tel Aviv Mayor Ronnie Milo said he will support a boycott of the shopping centre if it closes for the Sabbath.

New intercommunal incident in Egypt

ASSIUT, Egypt (AFP) — Police said Sunday they intervened to halt an anti-Christian incident in a southern Egyptian village in which children recently broke lights illuminating a cross atop a newly-restored church. Police said the priest in Manshat Al Kubra, a village of 5,000 inhabitants in Assiut province, called the police who dispersed the children and summoned the mayor to tell him that such incidents should not happen again. Police also made the children's parents meet with the priest. A priest in a neighbouring village told AFP under cover of anonymity that the sheikh of the mosque after Friday prayers led demonstrators to the church which had just been restored. Police had to intervene to stop clashes. In February, nine Coptic Christians were massacred in a church in the southern Egyptian town of Abu Qurqas. According to official statistics, the Copts represent 5.8 per cent of the Egyptian population but they mainly live in Cairo and in southern Egypt.

Libyan cabinet reshuffled

SIRTE, Libya (AFP) — The Libyan parliament Sunday announced a partial cabinet reshuffle in which two ministries were split up and two ministers replaced, officials said. At a meeting in the northern town of Sirte, the parliament agreed to divide into three the ministry of higher education, research, youth and vocational training, headed by Maatuk Mohammad Maatuk. However, he will remain in charge of vocational training and labour. Ali Morsi Al Shaeri, deputy speaker of parliament, will preside over the youth and sports ministry. The new ministry of education and scientific research will be headed by Mehdi Meftah Imbashi, who is taking up his first government post. The ministry of justice and general security is being divided in two. Mohammad Hijazi, the former justice and general security minister, has been given the general security portfolio, while Mohammad Belgacem, a former Libyan ambassador to the United Nations, will run the justice ministry. Health and Social Security Minister Baghdad Ali Al Mahmudi has quit and been replaced by Suleiman Al Ghamari. The general inspection minister, Mahmoud Badi, has been replaced by Nur Spag Hamad. The foreign affairs, defence and interior ministries have not been affected by the changes, the officials said.



FLOODS IN LOUISIANA: A street sign marks the intersection of River Road and Juniper Beach Road just above the flood waters of the Ohio River in Louisiana. Vehicles of all types have been abandoned by their owners, who hope to return to them when the waters recede (Reuters photo)

Opposition ends boycott of House after request for special session is endorsed

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Opposition deputies on Sunday ended a boycott of the Lower House after the House endorsed their request for a special session to discuss the latest Israeli measures in Arab East Jerusalem and the U.S. veto of a U.N. Security Council resolution criticising the Jewish state.

However, the boycott of

15 deputies failed to abort the sessions of the 80-seat House.

On Sunday, House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour put to vote a request by the opposition to hold a special session to discuss Jordan's response to the Israeli decision last week to build a new Jewish settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem as well as the sole U.S. veto on Friday of a European-sponsored Security Council resolution criticising Israel.

The request was approved by 36 to 30 votes on the floor. The special session will be held Tuesday.

Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour welcomed the decision but urged parliamentarians to

limit discussions to a paper presented by each bloc.

During Sunday's session, opposition deputies released a statement rejecting any government attempt to extend or terminate the mandate of the current Parliament.

"A decision to extend the term of the current legislature will be unconstitutional and undemocratic," said the statement, which was distributed to deputies and the press.

"Jordanian citizens must have a chance to exercise their right in voicing their opinion through their deputies and electing others if they deem necessary," the statement said.

"On the other hand, we also warn the government against attempting to dis-

solve Parliament before the end of its mandate, as such actions will create democratic and parliamentary vacuums and are therefore unconstitutional," the statement added.

It said such decisions would create "unnecessary parliamentary and constitutional rivalries" and that if the government allows itself such actions "it would be acting as a solitary, unconstitutional, and martial (law) administrator."

The statement added that opposition deputies will take the issue to the Higher Court of Justice if necessary.

During Sunday's session the House ratified 26 of 365 articles of a customs draft law, bringing the number of ratified articles to 88.

Iranian liberals support Khatami as president

TEHRAN (AP) — An influential political group has thrown its support behind Mohammad Khatami, a former culture and Islamic guidance minister, in May's presidential election, newspapers reported Sunday.

Nine candidates already have announced for the election, scheduled May 23.

Mr. Khatami won the backing of the Servants of Reconstruction, also known as the G-6, the papers said. The group is made up of liberal government technocrats who support Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani's programme of economic reforms and liberalisation.

The G-6 was founded to try to counter the influence of a powerful conservative faction in the Iranian Majlis, or parliament.

The group met Friday to formulate its election strategy, the English-language daily Iran News reported.

It backed Mr. Khatami over Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, the powerful parliament speaker who is close to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the paper said.

The three top candidates are Nateq-Nouri, Khatami, and Mohammad Mohammadi Reza Shahri, a former intelligence minister who is now in charge of Iranian pilgrims to the annual Hajj to Saudi Arabia.

All candidates will be vetted by the Council of Guardians, a parliamentary watchdog. The council is expected to reduce the field.

Mr. Rafsanjani is barred by the constitution from running for a third, four-year term.

Run to raise funds for cancer research

By Tanya Hahjouda
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Memorialising a young Canadian who died while raising funds for cancer research, the Terry Fox / Al Amal Centre Run will be held in Amman on April 25 to raise donations for Al Amal Centre.

"We came here today to support what this wonderful person did for humanity — we are all responsible for fighting this terrible disease together," HRH Prince Ra'd Zeid announced in a press conference Sunday.

The Terry Fox Run began in 1981 and has become the largest single day fund-raising event for cancer research anywhere in the world, with over 260 runs in 52 countries in 1995 alone.

Terry Fox's leg was amputated just above the knee when he was 18 years old as a result of bone cancer and his subsequent interaction with other cancer patients during treatment deeply moved him, according to the organisers of the run.

In order to find a cure, and as funds were limited, he planned to run across

Canada seeking donations for cancer research in the hopes of raising \$24 million.

Mr. Fox thus began his run across the country on April 12, 1980.

Five months later and well over halfway home to British Columbia, Terry fell ill as the cancer metastasised to his lungs.

He died on Jun. 28, 1981 — one month before his 23 birthday.

"The run has raised a total of \$168 million that otherwise would not have been available for cancer research," Canadian Ambassador to Jordan Michael Molloy said yesterday.

Prince Ra'd, Mr. Molloy, and Director of Al Amal Centre Abdullah Khatib jointly announced the upcoming run Sunday, calling on community spirit to make the run a success.

The run is open to everyone who wishes to participate, and any donations will be accepted, including refreshments for participants at the finish line.

"We hope that people demonstrate Jordanian solidarity and voluntary spirit to the world," Mr. Molloy

said.

The creation of Al Amal Centre was on a completely voluntary basis with over JD 7 million raised by both a day-long telethon in October of 1992 and "a marathon of 25,000 who marched from Sports City to the [projected location of] Al Amal Centre to raise funds," Dr. Khatib said.

Al Amal is the first comprehensive centre for cancer research in the region, providing screening, early detection, treatment, and public awareness about cancer prevention and is aiming for a complete opening by the end of this April.

"This run is not about money, but awareness — we can fight cancer through detection," Dr. Khatib concluded.

All funds raised for the run will be donated to Al Amal Centre and used for research.

Further information about the run will be announced in the coming weeks.

The run is held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the Canadian Embassy, Al Amal Centre and Prince Ra'd.

Negotiators reject limited deployment

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli cabinet on Friday over the objections of right-wing hardliners who have threatened to vote against Mr. Netanyahu's government over the issue in a parliamentary motion of confidence scheduled for March 17.

The hardliners wanted only a token further transfer of lands to Palestinian National Authority. Mr. Netanyahu spent much of Sunday trying to hold his coalition together by meeting with opponents to the redeployments, officials said.

As a result of the Oslo peace accords, the Palestinians currently have full civilian and security control over only eight main towns in the West Bank, representing about three per cent of the territory, plus administrative control over an additional 24 per cent where

Israel maintains a troop presence.

The remaining 73 per cent is under full Israeli control and includes main roads, 144 Jewish settlements and "military areas" as well as vast tracts of Palestinian agricultural lands.

The pullback plan finalised Sunday involves transferring seven per cent of West Bank land now under joint administration to full Palestinian control and a further two per cent which is now under exclusive Israeli authority to shared control.

It leaves self-rule areas isolated by Israeli-held territory and keeps all main roads in Israeli hands.

"The first phase offered by Israel is fraudulent as in fact only two per cent of the territory will be transferred," the Palestinian cabinet said in a weekend statement. "This is a

bold attempt to evade the peace agreements," it said.

Palestinian frustration over the limits of the pullback erupted into unrest in one West Bank village which saw its hopes for an end to military occupation disappointed.

Beit Omar, in the Hebron region of the southern West Bank, was under an army curfew Sunday after clashes between troops and stone-throwing residents.

Troops fired rubber bullets and tear-gas to disperse the protests which began Saturday night and continued on Sunday. Several arrests were reported.

Meanwhile, a council representing Jewish districts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip met in Jerusalem on Sunday to warn of the risks of Israel's "territorial concessions."

Iraq to open direct ship line with UAE

BAGHDAD (R) — An official Iraqi newspaper said on Sunday Baghdad would soon open a shipping line to transport passengers between its ports in the Gulf and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"The first naval line to transport passengers from Iraqi ports to Dubai of the United Arab Emirates and vice-versa will start within the next few weeks," said Al Thawra newspaper of the ruling Baath Party.

Since the U.N. trade sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the only outlet for Iraqis wishing to travel abroad is the 1,000-kilometre-long desert road running between Baghdad and Amman. That road also handles the bulk of Iraqi trade with the rest of the world.

Civilian flights from and to Iraq are banned by the sanctions.

The paper said private Iraqi company Al Khalij had obtained permission from both Iraqi and UAE authorities to start operation.

Baghdad traders had earlier said Dubai was offering cheaper and better products than Amman, which turned against Iraq in 1995 but it is now seeking stronger trade links.

Iraqis can go to Jordan without visas but the UAE has eased visa restrictions for Iraqi businessmen.

The UAE is now cam-

aigning to reconcile Arab countries that have shunned Baghdad since 1990. Last month a UAE group sailed for Iraq with 300 tonnes of food, medicine and clothes.

"Work is in progress to prepare passenger terminals in Umm Qasr and Khour Al Zubair ports (in southern Iraq)," the paper said.

Iraq's deputy foreign minister, Riyadh Al Qaisi, appealed to Egypt on Sunday to support lifting the U.N. sanctions that have devastated Iraq's economy, an Iraqi diplomat said.

The diplomat said Mr. Qaisi, who arrived in Cairo Saturday, met with Sayed Al Masry, assistant minister for international affairs at the Egyptian foreign ministry, and briefed him on Iraq's efforts to implement all U.N. resolutions.

The discussion is part of a diplomatic campaign Iraq has launched ahead of the meeting of the Arab foreign ministers scheduled later this month in Cairo.

Iraqi Information Minister Hamed Yousef Humadi met Saturday with Algerian President Liamine Zerrouli, while Justice Minister Shabbab Al Malki has visited Sudan and Yemen. Both are due to visit more Arab countries.

The Iraqi diplomat here said Mr. Qaisi urged Egypt to back Iraq's efforts to rally Arab support to get the sanctions lifted.

American computer exhibition to open in Amman Wednesday

By Sacha Baggili
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Fifth Annual American Computer Show, organised by the American Business Centre of the U.S. Embassy, will open here Wednesday at the Philadelphia Hotel.

Held under the patronage of Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania Abdullah, the show will display the latest hardware and software technology manufactured by U.S. companies.

"The 32 companies taking part in the event are local computer companies which represent American firms in Jordan," said Tania Khoury, a U.S. embassy spokesperson.

On the opening day of the show, U.S. Ambassador Wesley Egan will accompany Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania on a tour of the display booths, she said.

The show will be open to the public on Thursday and Friday when they will have an opportunity to "view data processing, new accessories, peripheral devices and other computer-related technologies."

Ms. Khoury said that in addition, Global-One Communications (Jordan) Ltd., one of the participating companies and co-sponsors, will set up an "internet cafe" for the public to log in to the "information highway" while attending the event.

Other co-sponsors of the American Computer Show include Byte-Middle East Magazine, Mirage Information Technology Group, Access, Aramex, Armouh Tourist Investment Company, Jordan Mobile Telephone Services, Al Ra'i Arabic daily as well as the Jordan Times.

Japan helps the improvement of schools in Jouza

AMMAN (J.T.) — Japan and Jordan Sunday signed an grant contract, whereby Tokyo will contribute \$84,399 in material aid to help two public schools in the Jouza Municipality of Karak. A Japanese embassy statement said.

The contract was signed by Mayor of Jouza Municipality Turki Dalasin and Ambassador of Japan to Jordan Takayuki Kimura, the statement said.

Jouza Municipality has about 3,000 residents and is seeking to upgrade its two public schools, but limited resources has hindered this plan, according to the statement.

The embassy said that Japan attaches great importance to the promotion of education as an asset to society and its future, therefore it responded to the requests of the people of Jouza, and will provide heating systems, furniture

and lighting equipment to the two schools.

This grant is provided within the framework of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Projects (GAGP), which was introduced to Jordan in 1993.

GAGP has been extended mainly to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research institutes, hospitals and local governments, with emphasis in such areas as primary health care, poverty relief, basic job training, women in development, environment, primary education and assistance to the disabled.

Through the GAGP scheme, Japan has so far donated \$1,828,983 to Jordan. The GAGP grants for FY 1996 (April 1996-March 1997) to Jordan are expected to reach \$800,000, including Sunday's donation.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordanian bank in London offers 'extremely' good return on deposits

THE LONDON-based Jordan International Bank PLC is offering long-term savers an "extremely" competitive return on their money. According to a brochure received from the bank, the saver may have access to finance (subject to certain requirements) of up to 80 per cent of the deposit, provided that such advances are secured by the saver's deposit.

The bank offers two types of accounts as long as the period of the deposit is for a minimum of two years. Under the first account, interest will be fixed at the beginning of each three months based on the 3-month LIBOR (London Inter Bank offered Rate) as at such date plus 1/16 per cent if the amount is between \$250,000 and \$499,999 or plus 1/8 per cent if the amount is \$500,000 and over.

Under the second account, interest will be fixed at the beginning of each six months based on the 6-month LIBOR as at such date plus the same rates and the equivalent amount mentioned above. No withdrawals are permitted within the two-year period from both accounts and clients must give written interest period whether they wish to continue or terminate the account (Special).

Jordan Trade Facilities Company plunges deeper in loss during '96

THE JORDAN Trade Facilities Company went deeper into the red last year as its accumulated losses went down to JD1.45 million at the end of 1996 compared to JD1.37 million at the end of 1995. The company's operational earnings last year were sharply down from 1995 as they plunged from JD\$47,819 to JD\$22,052 by the end of 1996. As such the 1996 net profit (loss) was JD177,276 loss last year compared to JD186,027 profit in 1995.

The loss resulted from a JD250,000 that was allowed for doubtful debts from previous years. Had it not been for the allocation the company would have ended 1996 with a JD72,624 net income after deducting administrative and general expenses. At the end of 1995, the net income was JD436,027 even after deducting the miscellaneous expenses.

The balance sheet as of Dec. 31, 1996 shows the following figures:

- Total current assets of JD1.65 million of which JD1.50 million are receivable. In 1995 the total was JD2.19 million of which JD1.55 million were receivable and JD437,790 in cash at hand and at banks.
- Total fixed assets of JD2.12 million compared to JD1.49 million at the end of 1995. Long-term investments amounted to JD1.45 million (JD0.82 million in 1995) of the total fixed assets.
- Current liabilities totalling JD657,192 and JD695,351 for 1996 and 1995 respectively.
- Total shareholders' equity amounted to JD3.87 million at the end of last year noting that the capital stood at JD4,199,965 and accumulated losses at JD1,455,391.

The Jordan Trade Facilities plans to continue focusing on car trade and selling cars by instalments as a main function of the company (Jordan Times).

Jordanians invest \$70.4m in constructing hotels at Petra

JORDANIAN PRIVATE investments in the city of Petra have reached \$70.4 million, mostly in the hotel construction sector. A Ministry of Tourism annual report said 41,448 tourists visited Petra last year, a 10 per cent increase over the 1995 figures. Tourists paid \$9.2 million in entrance fees to the city.

Kamel Mahadin, head of Petra's District Council, said the World Bank will contribute loans totalling \$23 million to finance 10 projects in the ancient city. Tourism revenues amounted to \$700 million in 1996 (AP).

Ministry of Finance repays foreign loans with funds earmarked for contractors

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a battle to procure JD 15 million in late payments from the Jordan Water Authority, the Jordan Contractors Association (JCA) issued a plea to His Majesty King Hussein Saturday in Al Ra'i Arabic daily.

Payments to the 27 contractors employed by the Jordan Water Authority (JWA) to construct and develop sewage treatment, water distribution systems, and other civil work projects are now 60 days past due.

"I can understand a 15-day late payment, but I can not afford this two-month delay," contractor Zuhair Hlayel told the Jordan Times.

He added that his work for the JWA was completed last Nov. 24, whereupon payment was due Jan. 6 and he still has not been paid.

According to a JWA official, funding was secured and included in their budget before employing the contractors, but the currency is not presently available.

"The JWA budget for these projects were in conjunc-

tion with the Ministry of Finance, but when we sought the funds for payment, we were informed by the ministry that the funding had been used to repay our outside loans," JWA Director of Public Awareness Adnan Zou'bi said Sunday.

"The fact that we have not paid the contractors makes us angry. We must pay to maintain our credibility," he said.

The issue is currently under discussion between the JWA and the Ministry of Finance, and the matter was also discussed during a Cabinet meeting last week.

"So far it appears that the Ministry of Finance will supply us with a JD15 million loan. The contractors will be paid and its just a matter of procedures and formalities now," Mr. Zou'bi said.

JCA water committee Chairman Khalil Ateyah acknowledged that he had heard of the Cabinet's recent decision, but said "we have seen no concrete evidence that the contractors will be paid anytime soon."

"Every month there is progress of work but these late payments delay our projects," Mr. Ateyah said.

He further stated that this was a continuous problem that face contractors every year, and stressed the need for the JWA to find a permanent solution to pay contractors for the many projects they carry out annually.

"We want our money and if they do not pay us we will stop work and demonstrate, though we do not want to do this because we love our country," he added.

However, Mr. Zou'bi asserted that this was the first year that the JWA had encountered problems in paying for their contracts, adding that in the future the money that was allowed in the budget would stay in the budget.

"Look," Mr. Zou'bi said, "its hard to lay the blame on any particular person, but we must implement coordination between the different government bodies to avoid such incidents."

He emphasised the importance of the current projects undertaken by the contractors, citing the current water shortage of the Kingdom and the need for government assistance in such projects.

Meanwhile, the JCA are still awaiting payment for projects implemented.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SUBISAM											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 09/03/1997											
LAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADS.	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
2.100	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	57.7	0.00	11	5855	11261	1.93	1.92	-0.01		
1.210	KID. EAST INV. BK.	57.7	0.00	3	2100	2173	1.05	1.03	-0.02		
2.610	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.2	6.08	2	1000	2290	2.30	2.29	-0.01		
2.150	JOR. ECONOMIC DEV. BK.	12.5	2.96	2	1050	4904	4.65	4.67	+0.02		
2.850	JOR. EDU. BK.	19.8	0.00	10	1892	5171	2.73	2.74	+0.01		
1.090	JOR. GULF BANK	5.1	8.14	4	1950	1677	0.86	0.86	-		
4.120	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.4	0.00	14	3376	12919	3.82	3.83	+0.01		
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 199.74	%CHG: 0.00	46	17233	40394					
2.800	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.3	10.38	2	1500	2848	1.89	1.89	-		
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 119.40	%CHG: 0.00	2	1500	2848					
1.830	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.4	7.27	13	7900	13035	1.64	1.65	+0.01		
1.840	KATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	1	1000	1140	1.13	1.14	+0.01		
1.050	KATL. SPECTRUM INV.	22.0	3.76	2	800	789	0.98	0.99	+0.01		
1.970	JORDAN INTL. TRD.	31.3	0.00	1	100	61	0.60	0.61	+0.01		
2.200	KID. EAST HOTELS	59.9	0.00	7	4800	6685	2.40	2.39	-0.01		
3.720	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	13.4	5.88	6	2400	7989	3.37	3.40	+0.03		
1.220	SHARA EDUCATION	8.6	6.11	2	1500	2700	1.80	1.80	-		
2.230	UNITED CO.	8	0.00	5	2000	2847	1.00	0.98	-0.02		
1.200	UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.00	3	125	93	0.76	0.75	-0.01		
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 106.85	%CHG: +0.22	41	21555	35499					
3.730	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.1	2.85	17	8901	31169	3.47	3.51	+0.04		
3.800	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	35.5	0.00	1	1000	3109	3.30	3.30	-		
6.100	ARAB POTASH CO.	18.3	3.31	3	550	3314	6.00	6.05	+0.05		
10.400	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	7.94	7	660	6639	10.08	10.07	-0.01		
1.590	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	62.6	0.00	7	1700	2384	1.38	1.41	+0.03		
2.460	INDUSTRIAL TRD.	34.7	0.00	2	300	782	2.60	2.58	-0.02		
7.950	JOR. WASTE MILLS	8.8	3.62	1	1000	6900	6.95	6.90	-0.05		
4.200	ARAB PHARM. IND.	20.8	5.29	19	4200	15864	3.75	3.78	+0.03		
7.250	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.5	2.66	1	200	1266	6.86	6.83	-0.03		
6.780	DAR ALDINA DV. INV.	13.1	4.18	3	1600	7674	4.76	4.79	+0.03		
9.960	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	39	87950	39128	0.56	0.59	+0.03		
1.020	NATIONAL IND.	9.5	9.38	4	2200	1408	0.64	0.64	-		
1.540	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	17	8350	8432	1.02	1.00	-0.02		
1.150	JOR. ROCKWELL IND.	5	0.00	1	100	76	0.77	0.76	-0.01		
3.730	KATL. CABLE WIRE MPAC	14.3	0.00	1	6000	14100	2.35	2.35	-		
1.670	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	28.1	0.00	4	1500	3817	1.49	1.50	+0.01		
2.720	UNIV. MOON IND.	5.1	11.90	9	2500	4201	1.70	1.68	-0.02		
1.820	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	16.8	0.00	10	4450	5969	1.35	1.34	-0.01		
1.270	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	24.2	0.00	15	1650	8519	0.89	0.89	-		
2.400	EL - KAY HEAVY MGR	8	0.00	3	1350	2498	1.85	1.85	-		
1.470	UNION CH. & VEG.	24.1	0.00	6	3250	3185	0.98	0.98	-		
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 118.28	%CHG: +0.55	172	128461	170782					
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 156.11	%CHG: +0.33	261	168749	249483					
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 09/03/1997											
7.90	JOR. TRADE FAC.	13.3	0.00	3	4000	2000	0.50	0.50	-		
8.60	UNION INV. SOF	66.0	0.00	3	1900	346	0.68	0.69	+0.01		
8.40	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	27	22836	9210	0.41	0.42	+0.01		
1.640	JOR. IND. INVEST. INC.	9	0.00	4	1500	730	0.50	0.50	-		
7.40	ARAB FOOD & MED.	5	0.00	12	5613	3103	0.58	0.58	-		
1.690	KATL. CHLORINE	8	0.00	2	500	683	1.37	1.37	-		
6.90	ARAB INTL. TRD.	31.3	0.00	1	100	2250	2.25	2.25	-		
8.10	KATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	8	3100	1589	0.52	0.52	-		
8.80	KATL. MTL. IND. HAMCO	8	0.00	44	67581	28384	0.42	0.42	-		
9.90	JORDAN STEEL	7	0.00	7	3375	3977	1.74	1.74	-		
7.00	ARAB ELEC. IND.	2	0.00	1	500	255	0.51	0.51	-		
7.80	MID-EAST PHARM. 751	8	0.00	2	7000	2820	0.60	0.61	+0.01		
7.70	BAL. PHARM. 651	8	0.00	2	8000	1843	0.58	0.59	+0.01		
6.80	YEM. IND.	25.9	0.00	2	1250	525	0.42	0.42	-		
8.90	KID. EAST COMPLEX	7.9	0.00	25	96200	64454	0.67	0.67	-		
GRAND TOTAL				148	232255	121867					

Jordanian-Saudi consortium wins new radio paging service concession

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A Jordanian-Saudi consortium has won a concession to operate a new radio paging service in Jordan from among three pre-qualified applicants, a government body announced Sunday.

It will be the second radio paging services in Jordan, which first opened the telecommunications market for the private sector by licensing the Kingdom's first independent operator outside the state monopoly in that sector seven years ago.

It is also part of the Kingdom's programme to reduce state investments in telecommunications services and give way to the private sector to enter the lucrative market.

A press release issued on Monday by the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), a government body supervising the privatisation of the telecommunications sector, said the United Saudi Communications Company (USC), a consortium of Jordanian and Saudi interests, was awarded the new radio paging license concession.

The USC offer of JD 4,197,030 for the concession was the highest among the three pre-qualified bidders and the company "has been invited to sign a license agreement for the new service," the release said. It did not identify the other two bidders.

"The consortium members have experience as operators of a successful paging business in Saudi Arabia," it said. "They are committed to using the state-of-the-art ERMES paging standard in Jordan."

The ERMES system is widely used in the Arab Gulf states.

The present operators, Jordan Radio Paging, uses the VHS system, a company official said.

The TRC said in its statement the proposed agreement with USC was the first in a series of licensing initiatives taken by the TRC with the assistance of McCarthy Tetrault, a Canadian law firm, which acts as its advisor.

The commission has issued two tenders for operators of public telephones and offers are due on April 1. It also plans to float tenders for a trunking licence "in the near future," said the press release.

Other proposed projects include a licence for value added data service providers which is being finalised and two more licences for cellular phones which will go operational as of Nov. 1, 1998.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"I'd like to live longer, but only if they could add years to the beginning of my life instead of the end."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Herl Arnold and Mike Argison

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TOUHY

OVERP

BULJEM

HELBED

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: THE

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BRIBE MINOR CONVEX PENCIL
Answer: A good way for birds to communicate - ON LINE

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World Indoor Athletics Championships

Tearful Mutola dedicates win to father

Koffa secures Greek sprint double

PARIS (Agencies) — Maria Mutola of Mozambique burst into tears after winning her third successive women's 800m title at the World Indoor Athletics Championships here on Sunday and dedicated the victory to her father who was killed a fortnight ago.

The 24-year-old Mutola, who won in a time of 1min 58.96secs, said she had returned to Mozambique after hearing of his death and thought about not coming to Paris.

"He was so influential and the closest friend I had. I was unable to eat or sleep for three days. However, my mother and sisters persuaded me to come and defend my title. I have done that and I dedicate this to my wonderful late father," Mutola said.

Mutola, who lost her outdoor world title when she was disqualified in the semifinals in Gothenburg in 1995, said she would probably just stick to 800 metres outdoors this season and try and beat the new powerhouse in the event Svetlana Masterkova of Russia.

"I was ill with pneumonia when I lost to her in Atlanta. I know I will have a chance of winning the outdoors title," Mutola said.

Mutola beat home Natalya Dukhnova of Belarus, who took the silver in 1:59.31, while Joetta Clark of the United States took third in 1:59.82, a personal best.

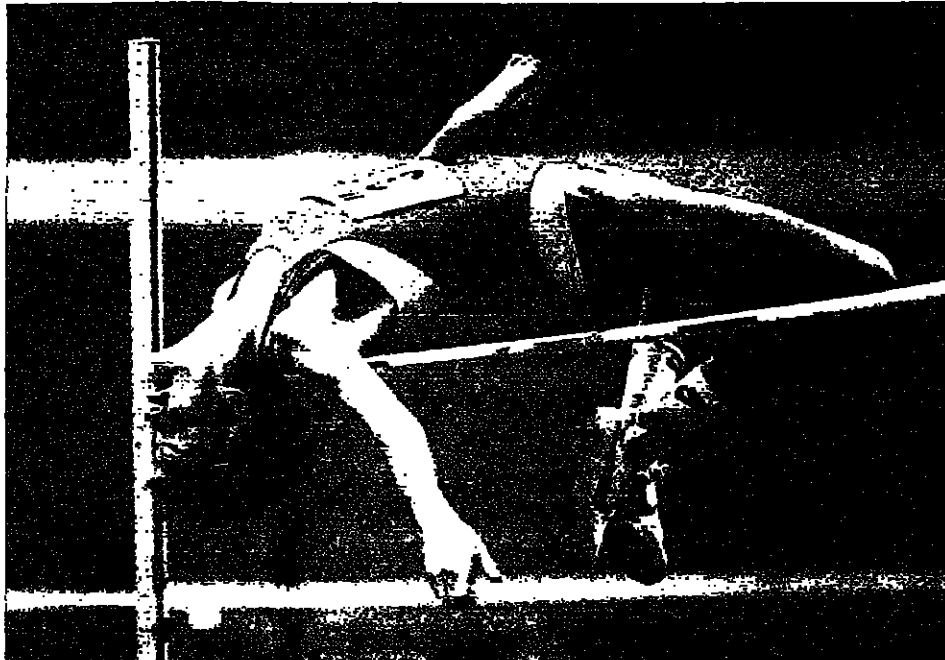
Meanwhile, Ekaterina Koffa took a second sprint gold for Greece on Saturday at the end of a week in which Athens made the final shortlist of five candidates to stage the 2004 Olympics.

Koffa clocked 22.76 seconds to win the women's 200 metres final by a hundredth of a second from Jamaica's 1992 Olympic silver medalist Juliet Cuthbert.

On the first day of the three-day championships on Friday, Haralambos Papachas won the men's 60 metres title.

Trinidad's Ato Boldon, favourite for the men's 200 title, pulled up suddenly in the final straight and crumpled to the track (see separate story).

Moroccan Hicham El



Stefka Kostadinova of Bulgaria clears the bar on her way to a gold medal in the women's high jump event at the three-day World Indoor Athletics Championships at Bercy stadium in Paris (Reuters photo)



Hicham El Guerrouj of Morocco celebrates his gold medal after the men's 1,500 metres final at the three-day World Indoor Athletics Championships at Bercy stadium in Paris. Rudiger Stenzel of Germany took the silver medal and William Tanui of Kenya captured the bronze (Reuters photo)

Guerrouj ran away with the men's 1,500 race although his time of three minutes 35.31 seconds was well outside his own world record of 3:31.18 set early last month.

German Ridger Stenzel was well back in second place ahead of Kenya's 1992 Olympic 800 champion William Tanui.

"It was an easy race for me," said El Guerrouj. "I

was well prepared and I was not worried.

"I have had a sensational start to this year and I hope there's more to come. This could be my year."

Kazakhstan's Igor Potapovitch won the men's pole vault with a leap of 5.85 metres despite the distractions of the men's long jump competition on the adjacent runway.

Inna Lasovskaya of Russia took the women's triple jump with a leap of 15.01 metres, only two centimetres short of the world record.

"Paris was always my favourite town and Bercy my favourite track," said Lasovskaya.

The women's 3,000 metres, the final track event of the evening, was won in a thrilling sprint finish by Romania's defending champion Gabriela Szabo, who overhauled Irishwoman Sonia O'Sullivan over the final metres.

Stefka Kostadinova of Bulgaria missed out on a world record but took the women's high-jump gold with a clearance of 2.02m. It was her fourth world title in six championships.

Kostadinova had three attempts at 2.09m to try and win a world record as well but failed.

Ivan Pedrosa of Cuba retained his world long-jump title.

Injury forces Boldon to quit golden bid

PARIS (AFP) — Sprint star Ato Boldon's bid to become Trinidad and Tobago's first major gold medalist since Hasely Crawford won the 1976 Olympic 100 metres gold in Montreal ended here instead mirroring the fate that befell Crawford in the 200 metres Olympic final.

Boldon's hamstring injury, that caused him to fall dramatically in the final straight of the indoor 200 metres World Championship on Saturday, was the same one that had forced Crawford to pull up while leading the 200 metres Olympic final at Montreal, bringing his dreams of an Olympic double to a cruel end.

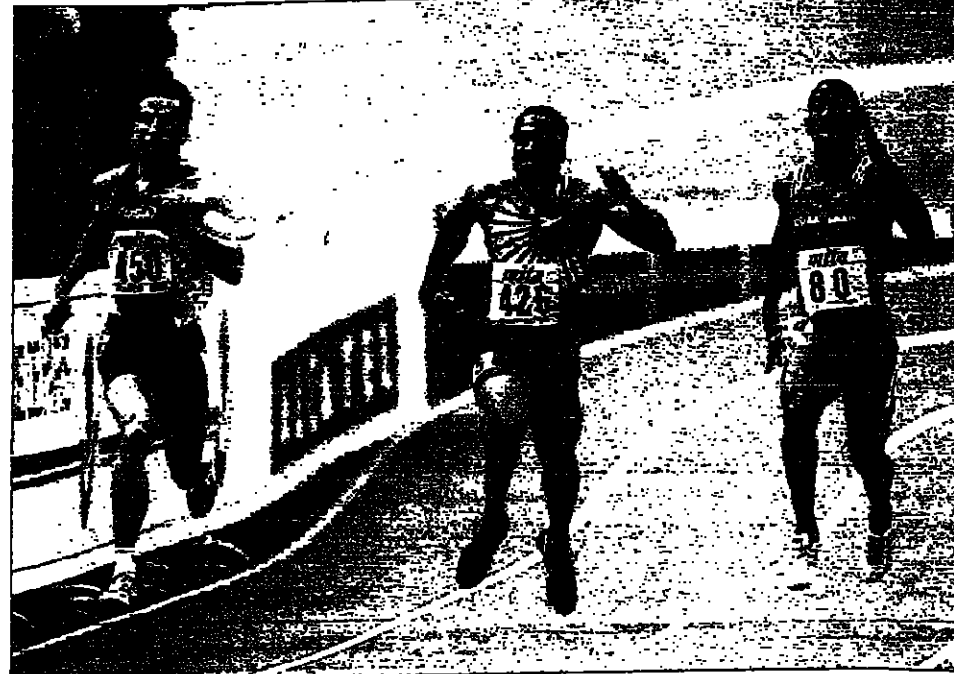
The 23-year-old Boldon, a double bronze medalist at the Atlanta Olympics, had broken the indoor 200 metres championship record in the semifinals on Friday night but he never looked comfortable running in lane five.

His apparent discomfort was supported by an IAAF official after the race.

"The up and down surface was to blame. Ato just didn't look comfortable at all. It's a very specialist style indoors. Outdoors it's level with one bend and that is why you get some odd results here. Just because you are an Olympic medalist doesn't mean that you are a certainty to beat less notable athletes indoors," the official said.

Boldon, a former double world junior champion in Tokyo in 1992, had voiced concerns about the track after his heat on Friday. "It is very bouncy and slow," he said.

The boisterous but charming Trinidadian, a former footballer, probably wished that he had selected the 60 metres instead of the 200 as he was carried off — particularly as it was straight and



Ato Boldon of Trinidad and Tobago (C) sprints to the finish of the men's 200 metres final seconds before injuring himself at the World Indoor Athletics Championships. The race was won by American Kevin Little (C). At right is Ivan Garcia of Cuba who took fifth place (Reuters photo).

flat.

He had talked about doing the sprint double earlier in the week until he saw that the programme made it virtually impossible, even for a man who considers himself almost immortal.

"It was asking too much of any athlete. I would have liked to have gone for it but even for the great athletes there is a limit, and running two 200 metre heats and probably three rounds of 60 metres is certainly out of bounds," Boldon said.

Boldon, who is well liked on the circuit despite a brash exterior, would have dearly loved his first major gold medal, although his popularity in Trinidad and Tobago rose after Atlanta to the same level as the West Indies cricket team's star Trinidadian batsman Brian Lara.

However, he knows that to really gain God like Staus in Trinidad he has to

win gold at a major championship. After Crawford won in Montreal he had his face imprinted on a stamp and no less than six calypso songs were written about him.

Boldon, who posted the fastest ever one day sprint double in Lausanne in 1996, would probably demand a statue coated in gold but for the moment the main thing on his mind is his recovery from the injury and prepare for August's World Outdoor Championships in Athens.

"He should be fine in about two weeks. He will certainly be better by the summer for the outdoor season and the World Championships which has always been the main target," Smith said.

In Smith Boldon has one of the great coaches on the circuit.

Smith, world record hold-

er of the old 440 yards distance, has been the inspiration behind France's double Olympic champion Marie-Jose Perec and many other great athletes down the years.

Boldon, a sociology student at UCLA in America where he has lived since 1988, may not have taken away anything from these championships but he was paid a compliment by the 200 metres champion Kevin Little, who in 1989 became the first white sprinter to represent the United States in 13 years.

"If Ato Boldon hadn't been in this event then it would have lacked real recognition and been dismissed as a below par championship. It is to his credit that he was about the only male sprint superstar who turned up. I am only sorry that he finished it by being carried off the track," the 28-year-old Little said.

Nantes stretch unbeaten run to 21 games

PARIS (R) — Nantes beat 10-man Bastia 3-0 on home on Saturday to extend their unbeaten run in the French First Division to 21 matches.

Bastia's Slovak midfielder Lubomir Moravcik, recently back from a long layoff after breaking a leg, was sent off in the 23rd minute after retaliating to some tough tackling by the Nantes defence.

Nantes's win greatly enhanced their hopes of a place in Europe next season as they joined a group of five teams bunched behind leaders Monaco who are six points clear.

Bastia stayed third, one point ahead of Bordeaux who drew 1-1 at fifth-placed Strasbourg in a dress rehearsal of next month's League Cup final. The Corsicans have a game in hand.

Marseille slipped further away from a return to Europe for the first time since their 1993 European Cup triumph when they fell 3-1 at Guingamp. They have yet to win away this season.

Monaco entertain defending champions Auxerre while second-placed Paris St. Germain are at home to Lyon.

Man. United lose first league match since November

LONDON (R) — Manchester United's hopes of extending their lead at the top of the English Premier League were dashed on Saturday, the champions losing 2-1 at Sunderland.

It was their first league defeat since November 2. Dennis Bergkamp scored both goals as Arsenal beat Nottingham Forest 2-0 to close the gap on United to three points.

Third-placed Liverpool host Newcastle on Monday. In the day's only F.A. Cup quarter-final, Juninho and Fabrizio Ravanelli were on target as Middlesbrough reached the semifinals for the first time in their 121-year history with a deserved 2-0 victory at Derby.

In other league games, Everton's slide towards the relegation zone continued with a 1-0 defeat at Leeds while Coventry and Leicester fought out a goalless draw at Highfield road.

Manchester United have 57 points from 29 games with Arsenal second on 54 from a game more. Liverpool are third on 53 but have two games in hand on the leaders.

United were a shadow of the side that overwhelmed Porto 4-0 in their European Cup quarter-final first leg in midweek. Sunderland had lost their last four games, including a 4-0 home defeat by Tottenham on Tuesday.

They went ahead after 52 minutes when United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel failed to hold John Mullin's flick and Michael Gray was on hand to fire the ball into the net.

Mullin drove in a low shot to make it 2-0 in the 76th but United pulled one back two minutes later with a bizarre own goal as Andy Melville deflected a David Beckham free kick past a startled Lionel Perez.

But Sunderland held on to take the points, much to the delight of manager Peter Reid. "We played well and thoroughly deserved our victory," he said.

Middlesbrough, who thrashed Derby 6-1 in the league on Wednesday, took the lead in their Cup tie in the 39th minute.

Craig Hignett played the ball into the path of Juninho and the Brazilian calmly lifted it over advancing goalkeeper Martin Taylor who was making his first appearance since breaking his leg in October 1994.

Middlesbrough had to

defend in depth in the second half but clinched a deserved victory in the last minute through Italian striker Fabrizio Ravanelli.

Bryan Robson's team carry a 2-0 lead into the home second leg of the league cup semifinal against Stockport on Wednesday but are still in dire trouble at the bottom of the league.

"I would love to win both cups and stay up," said Robson. "We've done well in the cups but need to get down to business in the league."

It was not the way Derby wanted to remember their last F.A. Cup tie after 102 years at the baseball ground. The club move to a new stadium next season.

Arsenal shrugged off the absence of suspended striker Ian Wright to easily beat a toothless Forest 1-0 at Highbury.

"Bergkamp played very well," said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger. "We needed lots of patience but we kept our discipline."

Looking certain to return to the Premier League next season are Bolton who beat Swindon 7-0 on Saturday to go 10 points clear at the top of the first division.

Ali dominates list of best fighters of the last 75 years

NEW YORK (R) — In a weekend set aside to honour the best fighters of the last 75 years — or at least their best parts — Muhammad Ali dominates the attention.

Ali was nominated in four categories — Best Fighter, Best Fight, Best Bouter ad Best Chin — as part of The Ring Magazine's celebration of its 75th anniversary.

Ironically, it was the former Cassius Marcellus Clay's remarkable chin that not only played a big part in taking him to the heavy-weight championship three times, but also likely contributed to the Parkinson's Syndrome he suffers from today.

Ali could, and did, absorb tremendous punishment in his memorable bouts, including, of course, the "Rumble In The Jungle" against George Foreman in Kinshasa, Zaire, in 1974.

It was that fight that gave boxing the phrase "Rope A Dope." Ali's term for his tactic against Foreman of leaning against the ropes and letting the awesomely-powerful Foreman pound away on him.

Finally, in the eighth round, when Foreman's punches were fewer and less powerful, Ali lashed out with a rapid-fire combination to knock down a tired, surprised Foreman to win the heavy-weight title before 62,000 people.

Ali also was nominated for the Best Fight, his 14th round knockout of Joe Frazier in the 1975 "Thrilla In Manila." Ali said that fight was the closest anyone could come to death.

In further testament to his talents, Ali also was nominated as best Fighter, in the voting for the Ring's championship belt, which was awarded at a dinner in Bally's casino last night.

Foreman was nominated for Best Puncher. Best Knockout — his November, 1994, one-punch knockout of Michael Moorer to win the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation titles — and Best Round for the fourth round of his fight against Ron Lyle in 1976.

Joe Louis was nominated for Best Fighter and Best Puncher.

The legendary Sugar Ray Robinson was nominated as Best Pound-For-Pound Fighter.

A portion of the proceeds from the fighters' autograph sessions will be donated to an organisation that raises money for indigent fighters, a Ring Magazine spokesman said.

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Aman.. Ya Ho

Four countries confirm participation in Arab Table Tennis Cup

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Four countries have confirmed participation in the Arab Table Tennis Cup scheduled to take place March 28 - April 1 at the Al Hussein Youth City.

According to the Jordan Table Tennis Federation (JTTF), Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Palestine and Lebanon will be competing in the five-day championship with Tunisia and Syria still unconfirmed.

Egypt and Bahrain have declined to take part citing their players' preoccupation with exams.

The preliminary list of participants includes some professional players on the Lebanese and Qatari teams. Lebanon's Larissa Shoaib who participated in last year's Atlanta Olympics will be playing here beside Qatar's 1996 Arab Cup champion Hamad Al Hamadi.

Lebanon's team consist of Joseph Shalhoub, Mohammad Habash, Jodeleen Track, and Larissa Shoaib.

Qatar's team includes Aref Abdul Rahman, Jaber Afif and Hamad Al Hamadi.

Palestine will be sending only two players while six players will represent

Jordan in the five-day championship.

The 11-member Jordanian men's team is currently continuing its training following which only three players will be chosen to represent the Kingdom.

The players are Abdul Aziz Rida, Mustapha Rida, Iyad Maknay, Ayman MaKnay, Adnan Ofi, Wael Sawalha, Bashar Kurdi, Wissam Bakeer, Yahay Majdalswi, Shogi Diya and Fadi Zraiqat.

The women's team includes Alia Tufaha, Hanadi Tufaha and Hadeel Awad.

Jordan table tennis team recently returned from Doha after participating in the 3rd Qatar International Open Table Tennis Championship.

The Kingdom's team played against Qatar, Iran and Belarus, teams considered some of the best in the world.

Jordan beat Qatar 3-0 and Iran by default and lost to Belarus 3-0. Jordan was eventually beaten by Sweden in the round of 16.

In the individual competition, Jordan's players were eliminated losing both singles and doubles matches.

Royal Jordanian are one of the sponsors of the event and have given a 50 per cent discount on air fares to all participating teams.

Jordan beats Oman 2-0 in Muscat

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE KINGDOM'S national soccer team Sunday beat Oman 2-0 in Muscat scoring their first win in the fifth friendly international in preparation for the Asian World Cup qualifiers which kick off in Manama, Bahrain April 8.

Jordan will be playing the Oman team again Tuesday to conclude their visit on the third leg of the team's camps abroad following visits to Lebanon and Iraq earlier last month.

Jordan had lost three matches and drew in one and the national team's coaches hoped the team's form would be boosted by the arrival of Al Faisali's players who include top strikers Subhi Suleiman, Jiryes Tadros and Mohammad Mahadin who was chosen best player in the Arab Champions Cup in Morocco earlier this week.

The Oman team was also looking to secure their first victory after losing 1-0 to Bahrain and drawing with a Swiss team.

The Jordanian team had five practice sessions after arriving in Muscat and were later joined by seven of Al Faisali's players, who were on leave to take part in the Arab Champions Cup in Morocco.

Last month Jordan twice lost to Iraq 1-0. In matches against Lebanon Jordan lost the first encounter 1-0 while the second one ended in a 0-0 draw.

Other friendlies scheduled by the Jordan Soccer Federation include two matches against Syria, March 16 in Amman and March 23 in Damascus.

Jordan's Asian Group 3 qualifiers start April 8 against the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Thirty-six Asian countries will contest the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups.

The 10 groups winners will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals. The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

Coulthard wins Australian Grand Prix

MELBOURNE (R) — Briton David Coulthard turned the form book on its head and completed a remarkable McLaren comeback on Sunday when he drove to victory in the season-opening Australian Grand Prix at Albert park.

The 25-year-old Scot, who was expected to be among the also-rans in an event dominated by the Williams team, ended up grabbing the second win of his career — after both Williams drivers crashed out of the race and defending world champion Damon Hill never made it to the start.

Championship favourite and pole-man Jacques Villeneuve of Canada was pushed off at the first corner after being involved in a collision with Briton Johnny Herbert's Sauber and the Ferrari of another Briton, Eddie Irvine.

And Heinz-Harald Frentzen of Germany, Hill's successor at Williams, also failed after leading for much of the 58-laps contest. He spun off



Australian Grand Prix winner, Scotland's David Coulthard (C) sprays champagne with third placed Finnish teammate Mika Hakkinen (R) and Germany's Michael Schumacher from the podium after the opening Formula One race in Melbourne (Reuters photo)

two laps from the end when he was running second and chasing the leading Coulthard.

Frentzen's retirement meant that double world champion Michael Schumacher of Germany was able to overcome a tactical problem — he had to make a late "splash and dash" pit stop for fuel — and finish second in his Ferrari ahead of Finland's Mika Hakkinen in the second of the resurgent McLaren's.

For the McLaren team, it

was a remarkable result. Their last win came at the Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide in 1993 and if they had not won it would have been their 50th race without a victory. The winner of their last race was the late Ayrton Senna of Brazil, in his final race with the team.

For Hakkinen, it was also remarkable. He suffered terrible head injuries in Adelaide at the 1995 Australian Grand Prix and it was a stirring result for him as he finished just six-tenths of a second ahead of Austrian Gerhard Berger's Benetton.

Frenchman Olivier Panis came home fifth for the new Prost team. He was the leading car using Bridgestone tyres following four Goodyear runners. Italian Nicola Larini finished sixth for Sauber.

Hill's luckless weekend ended on the pre-race parade lap when he retired with a throttle problem before the grid formed up.

Sanchez tries to stay patient

INDIAN WELLS (AFP) — Tenacity has always been Arantxa Sanchez Vicario's biggest asset, one she needs now more than ever.

Spain's world number-four, the top seed in the \$1.25 million Evert Cup, defeated Italian Silvia Farina 6-4, 6-2 to reach the third round on Saturday, and said she was looking forward to more matches to boost her confidence in the wake of a disappointing 1996.

Sanchez' victory over Farina, ranked 40th in the world, took an hour and 23 minutes.

"I started slow," Sanchez Vicario said. "I was getting used to the court, too. Then I started to try to take the ball a little earlier and move her around, after that I started to feel better."

For Sanchez, who lost close finals to Steffi Graf in both the French Open and Wimbledon last year, all match victories are encouraging.

She lost both of her Fed Cup singles matches, against Sabine Appelmans and Els Callens, earlier this month. "I have to keep going," she said. "There's nothing wrong. All the top players have ups and downs. I never had any down before ... you just have to keep going and it will come back if you don't quit."

In other second-round matches, Argentina's Florencia Labat rallied for a 6-6, 7-5, 7-5 victory over eighth-seeded South African Amanda Coetzee. She advanced to a third-round clash with France's Sandrine Testud.

The unseeded Testud upset 16th-seeded Lisa Raymond 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 — her second comeback victory in as many matches.

Sixth-seeded Irina Spirlea

of Romania pulled off a 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (9/7), 6-2 victory over unseeded Alexia Dechaume-Balleret of France.

Sampras starts season's 1st Super 9

The Pete Sampras juggernaut rolls into Indian Wells on Monday, as the World No. 1 begins his bid for his fourth title of the year at the \$2.3 million Champions Cup.

Sampras comes into the first of this year's Super 9 events — the ATP Tour's premier tournaments — needing just three more tournament victories to take his career total to 50.

He has won 17 matches in a row in 1997, and his match-winning streak of 20 stretches back into 1996.

The field also includes defending champion Michael Chang, seeded third behind Austrian Thomas Muster, and 10th-seeded American Andre Agassi, who will be trying to reverse his fortunes in the California desert.

"I'm looking forward to it," Sampras said. "All of the top guys will be there. It will be a good chance to see how I'm playing." Sampras' results themselves would seem to answer that question.

But he had to post two comeback victories to claim his most recent title, in Philadelphia on March 2. "It's rewarding," Sampras said of his Philadelphia win.

"I didn't play my best tennis the last couple of matches, but those are the matches that you need to find some sort of way to win. I kind of hung in there and I wasn't going to hand it to them."

Since Philly, Sampras has

had a week off, skipping this week's ATP Tour event in Scottsdale, Arizona. He was practising in Indian Wells on Saturday, hoping to acclimatise himself to the dry desert air.

Agassi suffered another early exit in Scottsdale, leaving himself with a 3-3 match record for 1997 and an appearance in the semi-finals in San Jose as his best performance of the year.

In the first round Agassi will take on big-serving Australian Mark Philippoussis, who powered into the Scottsdale final on Saturday. The Aussie's success in Scottsdale comes on the heels of his second-round exit in Milan to World No. 59 David Prinosil.

Sampras said he expected the form here to pretty much follow the rankings, although Muster is more at home on clay than hard courts.

"Andre seemed like he'll be in contention. Just go down the rankings. Those are the guys that are going to be there over the week."

They include fourth-seeded Croatian Goran Ivanisevic, number five Marcelo Rios of Chile, sixth-seeded Swede Thomas Enqvist, No. 7 Wayne Ferreira of South Africa and eighth-seeded Carlos Moya of Spain.

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CALL FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST JO-Amman: Provision of Services (96/S 1-149208/FR)

1. Name and address of the awarding authority: Delegation of the European Commission for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, P.O. Box 926794, for the attention of the Head of Delegation, JO-Amman. Tel: (962-6) 668191. Facsimile (962-6) 666746.

2. Category of service: CPC reference Nos. 865, 866.

Description

— The contract involves providing the European Commission's Delegation in JO-Amman with a technical assistance facility comprising highly qualified experts, support and management personnel, the necessary support and welcoming infrastructures together with their maintenance personnel for supporting the European Community's Cooperation with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan within the framework of the MEDA programme. The activities to be developed concern the specialisation fields below. The tasks to be performed involved identifying, implementing, monitoring and assessing actions and projects recognised as being eligible for Community financing, as much concerning technical and economic aspects as financial.

— The experts shall have a university degree or equivalent qualification and a minimum of proven professional experience of 10 years from obtaining the qualification.

— The dividing up and number of experts for technical assistance, by activity sector, are the following:

development of the private sector, including the reform of the financial sector, and participation of the private sector in infrastructure management: 1 expert,

structural adjustment and monitoring of macro-economic developments, including domestic and foreign trade: 1 expert,

development of non-trading companies and NGOs: 1 expert.

— Management and secretariat personnel comprises 4 persons.

— Maintenance and caretaking personnel for the infrastructure comprises 4 persons.

— All personnel must have a command of English.

— The personnel put forward for providing these services must be from a Member State of the European Union or the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

— The services are to be provided for the renewable contractual annual periods over a maximum period of 5 years.

— The experts will be under the supervision of the statutory personnel of the Delegation of the European Commission in JO-Amman, and will perform their tasks in accordance with the requirements of these services and will produce an activity report to be approved by Commission services every 6 months.

— Complementary details will be in the tender documents.

3. Place of delivery: JO-Amman.

4. The execution of the service is not reserved to a particular profession.

It is envisaged that a maximum of 10 service providers will be invited to tender.

Contract duration: The contract is intended to run for a 1-year period which can be renewed annually up to a maximum of 5 years.

Guarantees required: All advance payments exceeding ECU 50,000 shall be covered by a guarantee deposit.

Documentation to be sent:

— extract from the police record or equivalent document (for independent persons),

— certificate to the effect that the candidate has fulfilled his tax and social security obligations,

— certificate of enrolment on the professional or trade register,

— company's balance sheet or overall turnover for the past 3 years (for legal entities),

— reference of the services provided and their value over the past 3 years,

— statement on the average annual number of managerial staff over the past 3 years,

— presentation of curricula vitae of the experts envisaged and of the management and secretariat personnel for providing the required services. The profile of the aforementioned persons, professional experience in the fields of operation, as well as appropriate geographic experience and work experience in a multicultural environment, will determine candidate selection.

Final date for:

a) Receipt of requests to participate: 12-2-1997.

b) Address: Delegation of the European Commission for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, P.O. Box 926794, for the attention of the Head of Delegation, JO-Amman, Tel. (962-6) 668191, facsimile (962-6) 666746.

c) Requests may be drawn up in any official European Union language.

Final date for dispatch of invitations to tender: 14-3-1997.

Turkish Islamists resist military's crackdown plan

ANKARA (AFP) — A bitter row between Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and Turkey's pro-secular military is set to deepen as the Islamists continue to block an army-backed plan for a crackdown on religious extremists, analysts said Sunday.

The deputy leader of Mr. Erbakan's pro-Islamic Welfare Party said on Saturday that the government may not implement the 20-point plan raised at a meeting of the military-dominated national security council (MGK) on Feb. 28 although Mr. Erbakan later signed it.

"There is no obligation for the government to implement the MGK resolutions (which includes the military plan to curb creeping Islamisation) as they are," said Riza Ulucak in a new challenge against the army.

"The MGK's role should not be over-emphasised and should not be considered beyond the constitution," Mr. Ulucak said.

The Welfare official's remarks came three days after Mr. Erbakan signed the resolutions, with a five-day delay and under strong pressure by the military, defenders of Turkey's secular tradition.

Political analysts said Mr. Ulucak's remarks suggesting that Mr. Erbakan's government may not implement the original resolutions would lead to a new rift with the military, wary of Welfare's pro-Islamic slant.

The military already issued a fresh and indirect warning against Mr. Erbakan on Saturday, saying: "No one will ever be able to stop the progress of the Turkish nation towards contemporary civilisation with determination."

In a statement, the Turkish general staff also denied Welfare criticism that it had been using powers beyond its

constitutionally defined role. "The Turkish armed forces is extremely sensitive in determining the limits of its authority and responsibilities," it said.

"Erbakan is behaving as if nothing has happened and strained Turkey's regime in the last 10 days," commentator Derya Sazak said in the liberal Istanbul daily Milliyet on Sunday.

"In the political atmosphere created by Welfare, religious extremism and conservative tendencies are being strengthened, and on the other hand we are faced with daily discussions about a potential military intervention," Mr. Sazak said.

"So is it possible that this kind of a situation can inspire positive feelings in society?" he said.

Theoretically, the MGK — whose members include the president, the prime minister, senior ministers and five top military commanders — is an advisory body, but its resolutions are traditionally implemented to the letter by the government.

The army action plan includes a ban on pro-Sharia propaganda on pro-Islamic television and radio, tighter restrictions on religious dress, and measures to prevent radicals from entering state administration.

The military also demands strict surveillance of financial organisations controlled by religious fraternities and firm controls on the purchase of pump-action shotguns, the sales of which have surged in recent months, allegedly to pro-Islamic radicals.

Leader of the conservative main opposition Motherland Party Mesut Yilmaz has already called for the creation of a "national unity government," warning that the military could topple Mr. Erbakan's cabinet by force.



ROYAL ENGAGEMENT: The Royal Court on Sunday announced the engagement of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bent Ali Ben Nayef to Amjad Yousef Farrah. The engagement was attended by His Majesty King Hussein, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Mohammad, Prince Ali Ben Nayef and Princess Wijdan Ali, other Royal family members, senior officials and Farrah family members (Photo by Meldos)

Netanyahu 'threatens' to build coalition with Labour to quell right-wing revolt

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tried to quell a revolt Sunday by right-wingers opposed to his decision to hand more territory over to the Palestinians, threatening to form a cabinet of "national unity" with members of the opposition Labour Party.

Mr. Netanyahu met through-out the morning with leading politicians in his coalition who have threatened to withdraw their support if he does not back down on a decision Friday to expand Palestinian control over an additional two per cent of the West Bank, his spokesman said.

"He is seeing practically all the coalition members who threatened to bolt in one-on-one meetings today," said Mr. Netanyahu's main policy adviser David Bar Ilan.

While Mr. Netanyahu views the politicians' complaints "as threats rather than anything serious, he cannot dismiss them out of hand," he told AFP.

As the talks continued,

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai met with army officials to prepare for the new transfer of power to the Palestinians, the first of three troop withdrawals from the West Bank planned over the next 18 months.

At least eight of the ruling coalition's 66 members in the 120-seat parliament have threatened to back a motion of no confidence submitted by Labour over Mr. Netanyahu's policies as a result of the new West Bank pullouts.

"I do not trust the prime minister, and I will vote accordingly," said one of the eight, Benny Begin of Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party. He was joined by senior Likud deputies Uzi Landau and David Reem as well as deputies from the far-right National Religious Party and a member of the Geshet group of Foreign Minister David Levy.

Faced with the revolt, Mr. Netanyahu for the first time publicly hinted he could dissolve his coalition and form a "national unity" government with the Labour Party of former Prime Minister Shimon Peres in order to pursue the peace process. "I hope these (coalition) members will not force me to consider the possibility of a national unity government," Mr. Netanyahu said in a weekend television interview.

Members of Mr. Netanyahu's entourage have on several occasions in the past waved the threat of a "national unity" government to calm unruly right-wingers in government.

However Mr. Netanyahu added credibility to the option by meeting privately Friday with Mr. Peres.

Officials said the two men simply discussed details of the government's redeployment plans, but Mr. Peres' interest in returning to government as part of a "national unity" cabinet is widely known.

Michael Eitan, a senior Likud member, also came out publicly Sunday for bringing Labour into government, saying this would add to the government's pro-peace credentials and "counter international pressures."

He specifically referred to the uproar among Arabs and international governments over Mr. Netanyahu's decision to build a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Interviewed on Israel Radio Sunday, Mr. Peres said the time was not right for a national unity government, and a party spokesman told AFP Labour leaders would meet Monday to formally declare their hostility to joining a Likud-led government at this time.

But the party at the same time agreed to postpone the no-confidence motion in parliament originally planned for Monday until after Mr. Netanyahu returns from a visit to Russia at the end of the week. The move was seen by some as a friendly concession designed to avoid closing the door to a future agreement on a joint cabinet.

Assad to attend Islamic summit

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on Sunday accepted an invitation from his Iranian counterpart, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, to attend the December summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Tehran.

Assad spokesman Jibril Kourieh said the president gave a message to Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati confirming that he would attend. Mr. Velayati arrived in Damascus Sunday to deliver the invitation.

The Iranian official also held talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa on "bilateral relations and the situation in the region."

Mr. Velayati is on 10-nation tour that also will take him to Sudan and Uganda.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Mr. Velayati would invite the heads of Arab and Islamic countries to the OIC meeting. The exact dates have not yet been announced.

Mr. Velayati also will visit Sudan and Uganda to discuss an Iranian initiative aimed at restoring relations between the two countries, IRNA said.

Sudan and Uganda have been trading accusations since 1989 that each other's government was arming and harbouring rebels. They broke relations in 1995.

Mr. Velayati also plans to stop in the Czech Republic, the agency said.

In Damascus, Mr. Velayati was met at the airport by Mr. Sharaa.

Syria is Iran's closest Arab ally since it backed Iran in its 1980-88 war with Iraq. Iran wants a good turnout at the Islamic summit.



U.S. falcon chases male of dreams to Canada

VICTORIA, British Columbia (R) — A female peregrine-gyr hybrid falcon disappeared from Dave Foley's Mount Vernon, Washington home Feb. 18, after it "fell in love" with a wild gyrfalcon and started chasing it, Foley said after taking the bird home on Friday. "She's going through a hormonal change," Foley told the Canadian Press news agency. Two weeks later, an SPCA officer netted the bird in a downtown Victoria alley as it was dining on a pigeon. Foley has renewed plans to use the bird in a show to demonstrate how falcons dive for their prey at speeds of more than 120 kilometres an hour.

Work begins on 'Legend of Zorro'

PACHUCA, Mexico (AP) — With the backdrop of a turn-of-the-century hacienda and a large security contingent, Director Martin Campbell has started filming Tristar Picture's "The Legend of Zorro." Antonio Banderas and Anthony Hopkins star in the re-make of the 1930's Zorro classic, shot at a former Agave cactus plantation in this central Mexican state. Actors and crew are expected to remain on location for three weeks at the Santiago Teulapayac plantation before heading to a former quarry for another eight weeks of filming. Other old haciendas and mines will be included in a list of Mexican locations, some of which took three months to prepare.

Reindeer breeders see future

NADYIM, Russia (AP) — Reindeer breeders from seven Arctic nations have concluded there is a future for their profession after all. The breeders, meeting in the town of Nadyim in Russia's far north, created a world association of reindeer breeders to further their efforts of keeping their business alive. ITAR-TASS reported. Johan Matis Turi, the Norwegian who was elected the association's chairman, told the news agency he was not afraid that reindeer breeding will cease despite its problems. The association will work to establish international commercial and cultural contacts, the report said. The congress adopted the association's charter and developed several projects to boost the reindeer-breeding science and practices. ITAR-TASS said. The congress' next meeting will be held in Finland.

Lee sues for Penthouse video

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Penthouse magazine is going to have to open its books for Pamela Anderson Lee, who is suing the magazine over a video showing the former "Baywatch" co-star and her rock star husband having sex. She and husband Tommy Lee, the Motley Crue drummer, want to know how much money Penthouse magazine made on the issue with descriptions of the video, which they say was stolen. A judge ruled Friday the magazine will have to release the sales information. The Lees sued Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione a year ago after the magazine acquired the video allegedly stolen from their Malibu home by a construction worker. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Ronald Sohigian detailed the contents of the video in October, which he said showed the couple "apparently" having sex on a public highway and in a boat on Lake Mead. Penthouse officials have maintained the magazine did not steal the video or arrange for it to be stolen. The couple wants the video returned.

Brotherhood leader rules out members joining government

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Muslim Brotherhood said Sunday that its members have no interest in joining a government in Jordan because such move would mean the Brotherhood's recognition of Israel.

"The Muslim Brotherhood Shura Council has issued a statement stressing that it is better for us to remain in the ranks of the opposition than entering a door that leads to our recognition of Israel, something which contradicts our principled stands and ideology," said Abdul Majid Thuneibat, the Brotherhood's spiritual guide.

Speaking in an interview with Al Dustour daily published Sunday, Mr. Thuneibat said: "Joining government in Jordan means a split in the bloc which continues to oppose the government for its ties with Israel and which continues a drive to force the Islamic movement to recognise the de facto situation."

"Anyone who joins the government automatically becomes committed to recognising Israel and this is what the government want us to do at present but we were on our guard," said Mr. Thuneibat.

"What is needed now is a popular front that can safeguard the country and the nation against the Zionist enemy's attempts against Islam and the opposition," he added.

Asked about statements by some Brotherhood members expressing desire to join the government, Mr. Thuneibat said: "We cannot prevent people from airing their

views but members have to seek the best interest of the Brotherhood and should remain committed to the Brotherhood's decisions."

Asked about the Brotherhood's influence as a pressure group in opposition to the government, Mr. Thuneibat said: "When the government takes a decision it seems to be acting in the opposite interest of the public which includes the Islamic movement."

He said the Brotherhood is composed of 120,000 members which means 600,000 citizens or 10 per cent of the total population. He also noted that the Islamic movement won 22.5 per cent of the total votes in the 1993 in the last professional union elections.

"This is a large popular base which the government takes into consideration," he added.

"Our opposition to the government stems from our commitment that the government's decisions do not meet the people's desires and aspirations and none of the decisions taken by the government has won people's approval," he said.

Asked about an Islamic movement delegation's recent visit to Syria he said the visit was upon the request of the Brotherhood's Shura council because "we are for openness to various nations, especially Muslims, to explain our Islamic movement because many regimes are unaware of the realities behind the movement and its objectives."

Netanyahu visits Moscow today

MOSCOW (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu begins a visit to Russia Monday to discuss the Middle East peace process and bilateral relations with President Boris Yeltsin and top officials.

Russia attaches "special importance" to the visit, despite complications in relations between the two countries. Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk said Sunday.

"Little things do complicate our relations, but they do not determine their character," he told Interfax news agency.

Mr. Netanyahu is to meet with Mr. Yeltsin. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov during his visit, which ends Wednesday.

Russia is the co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process launched in 1991, along with the United States, although its role has been largely eclipsed by Washington.

Moscow has consistently given a warm reception to the Palestinians' demands for an independent state, something rejected by Israel.

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